

AMERICAN DRAMA AND THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL
HOMOPHILIA, 1952-1972

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Homosexuality is not a new phenomenon. But the recent surge in the American public's awareness of homosexuality is new. Twenty years ago homosexuality was a taboo subject; today, while it is not exactly a household topic, it approaches that distinction. This awareness on the part of the American public is rather like a national "coming out of the closet."^{1*}

Many factors are responsible for the development of this awareness. There has been a perceptible change in American sexual morality; sexual permissiveness has become an important social attitude. This permissiveness has allowed homosexuals, themselves, to take tentative steps from their individual closets. Civil rights gains made by various ethnic minorities encouraged homosexuals to organize and agitate for civil rights of their own. Some of this agitation has taken place in the presence of the press, and it has been duly reported to the public. Important personalities have openly discussed their homosexual proclivities. Homosexuals have been interviewed on national television. Homosexuals spoke at the Democratic National Convention in 1972.

*Notes appear at end of section.

There have been newspaper and magazine articles wherein homosexuals have shucked the cloak of "passing" as heterosexual and declared their homosexuality.

A few years ago, the general public would have reacted to such disclosures with suspicion and hostility. At one point in our recent history, hiding one's homosexuality was considered to be the wisest course of action because of various social sanctions meted out to the homosexual stigma. This era is epitomized by the McCarthy hearings in the early 1950s when even "the suspicion of homosexuality was enough to destroy the careers of accused public servants."²

This phobia of homosexuality is no longer so predominate in the American society. Great strides have been made to alter the attitude of the public from one of homophobia to homophilia.

At the same time that the public's attitudes are being altered, the attitudes of homosexuals toward themselves are being changed. While it is not yet routine, it is no longer uncommon for a homosexual to state his sexual preference, either implicitly or explicitly, to his heterosexual acquaintances. This openness implies that a valid homosexual identity is being forged which is demanding a place for itself in our society. The desire to pass as heterosexual is no longer considered the necessary and wisest course of action.

These attitudinal changes toward homosexuality are reflected in the current American culture. Drama is a cultural entity which reflects current attitudes and shapes new attitudes. This unique ability to do two jobs makes drama an important element in any social change. Notably homosexuality has become common thematic material for the drama. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the role drama has played in the emergence of the current social attitudes toward homosexuality, from the point of view of the general public as well as the homosexual.

The new awareness of homosexuality has resulted in a more general use of some words which were previously used primarily in the homosexual subculture. Some of the words are relatively familiar; some are new in their general use. Their connotations and denotations should be clarified to prevent misunderstanding.

Homosexual has as many definitions as there are people attempting to define it. An average citizen might define a homosexual as a person who has a physical and/or emotional attraction to an(other) person(s) of the same sex and who expresses this attraction through emotional and/or sexual intercourse with the other person(s). In the psychiatric field, psychoanalysts regard "homosexuality as a perverse solution to anxieties about identification."³

The above psychiatric definition, however, has some highly negative connotations. "Perverse" and "anxieties" are words which elicit negative responses. A leading psychoanalyst, Dr. George Weinberg, who has worked with homosexuals, gives a definition of homosexuality which does not import negative connotations: "To be homosexual is to have an erotic preference for members of one's own sex."⁴

Homophobia means a "prejudice against homosexuality."⁵ Negative connotations associated with homosexuality tend to concretize into phobias. Dr. Weinberg, in his book Society and the Healthy Homosexual, castigates the majority of his fellow psychotherapists for contributing to the prevailing social homophobia through their continued use of negative references to homosexuality. Weinberg does not view homosexuality as perverse.

Weinberg notes that many homosexuals are presently homophobes. He considers this unfortunate for the homosexual so involved, since "the attitude is a condemnation of self."⁶

Weinberg furthers his unorthodox views by isolating the problem of the homosexual and the homophile in the United States, where "the prevailing attitude toward homosexuals . . . is revulsion and hostility."⁷ He states, "The critical issue is that one must act

everywhere in accordance with the premise that homosexuality should in no way be considered a detraction."⁸

The unfamiliar term homophile is identified by Dr. Weinberg as "any humane person who has given serious attention to the status of the homosexual in our society, and pitches in to help."⁹ Further discussion of homophile is contained in a report developed by a homophile organization:

The term "homophile" has come into use on one or more of several grounds of a more or less "public relations" nature: 1) it places the emphasis on "love" ("phile") rather than "sex"; 2) it can be applied to organizations which include heterosexual members of supporters without implying that they are themselves homosexual; 3) it can be employed as a euphemism or partial disguise for the term "homosexual" where use of the latter might result in embarrassment to the user.¹⁰

In addition to the eradication of homophobia, homosexual organizations and homophiles are interested in establishing a valid homosexual identity. A valid identity is described by Laud Humphreys, a sociologist who has worked extensively with the homosexual movement, as "one in which the individual finds congruence between who he feels he is, who he announces himself to be, and where he feels his society places him."¹¹

Foster Gunnison, Jr., an active New England homophile, speaks of a need in the homosexual ranks for a valid identity:

There is a longing [among homosexuals] to be a working part of the larger society that now rejects them; to be accepted, as homosexuals, and positively

valued, as homosexuals; and there is a willingness to do what is necessary to achieve this.¹²

Finally, the word gay has assumed a new denotation as a result of this sudden public awareness of homosexuality. Within the homosexual ranks gay is frequently interchanged with homosexual. Depending upon context, gay has several homosexual connotations. Gay as applied to homosexuals is used as reference to a style of life in preference to homosexual which more specifically denotes a sexual preference. It has also assumed euphemistic use in lieu of the potentially embarrassing homosexual.

What do homosexuals have to do with drama, and what does drama have to do with homosexuals? There is definitely an interrelatedness between drama and homosexuality and homosexuals. Articles abound which allege a detrimental effect homosexuals have had on theatre in the United States. William Goldman in The Season castigates our leading playwrights, at least those who are not married, for presuming to write of domestic strife. His work implies that these men are homosexual, have no valid knowledge of heterosexual love, and are therefore incapable of penning a sound heterosexual play. Tennessee Williams, noted as probably the most influential American playwright of the century, has recently discussed his sexual proclivities, and their influences on his plays, in Playboy.¹³ Dr. Donald M.

Kaplan discusses homosexual influences on the drama in "Homosexuality and American Theatre: A Psychoanalytic Comment," in Tulane Drama Review.¹⁴ There can be no question about the influence certain homosexuals have had on American theatre. In turn, the drama, which has long been an instrument for education and entertainment, lately has been used to assist certain homosexuals and their organizations in combatting homophobia. Since the homosexual for such a long time has reacted to homophobia in himself and in others, it is quite possible that the homosexual's influence on drama is reflected in his artistic output. There have been, however, no studies which indicate the breadth and depth of this relationship.

No study of drama has been made to determine the role it has played in the development of favorable societal and personal attitudes toward homosexuality. No study has been made into the homosexual organizations to determine their attitudes toward drama, and the part drama can and has played in the attempts of these groups to further homophilia.

Drama has played a part in the development of societal homophilic attitudes. Dramatic characters who are homosexual, and who possess admirable qualities, qualities such as honesty, integrity, and good will, have been presented on the commercial stage. This presentation helped stimulate discussions, especially after the

presentation of The Boys in the Band. The fact of such open discussions possibly helped to alter public attitudes.

There has been at least one doctoral dissertation on homosexuality and theatre: An Analysis of the Treatment of the Homosexual Character in Dramas Produced in the New York Theatre from 1950 to 1968, by Donald Lee Loeffler, 1969, Bowling Green State University. In this dissertation Dr. Loeffler analyzes the homosexual characters in eighty-six plays. An Analysis . . . deals mainly with certain homophobic attitudes as evinced on the stage in New York, and it contains some supportive psychological materials.

Analysis of the commercial plays which dealt with homosexuality and which were presented during the 1952-53 through 1971-72 seasons, along with a study of the growth and development of certain homosexual organizations, and the use of the drama therein, will indicate the growing acceptance of homophilia in the United States. In this dissertation twenty plays which have been produced in this country over the past twenty years will be examined in light of the extent they reflect homophobia, homophilia, and degrees between raw extremes. Five of the plays virtually express total homophobia, while only one, The Killing of Sister George, can be said to reflect predominately the attitudes of homophilia. The remaining fourteen plays reflect the gradual change in

acceptance of homosexuality from 1952 to 1972. As the years pass it is noted that the predominate sentiment toward homosexuality in the plays under consideration changes from one of aversion to tolerance to laissez-faire. The difference between tolerance and laissez-faire is the difference between the last vestiges of homophobia and the beginnings of unfettered homophilia.

It will also be noted that a change in presentational point of view is observable. In the 1950s the homosexual was presented as part of a heterosexual environment; more often than not he foundered. By 1972 the homosexual environment had come into its own, and the heterosexual was just as likely to be presented on unsure footing.

Furthermore, analysis of homosexual organizations will show the role drama played in their attempts to establish a different, more positive, self-concept within the homosexual subculture. Some homosexual organizations have encouraged playwrights within their own groups, in order that their group's special interest, or special purpose, might be furthered through the use of drama. These productions have helped these groups in establishing homophilia and a valid homosexual identity within their own ranks. Perhaps in the instances of earlier productions, it might be more accurate to state that the drama was utilized in the hope of eradicating homophobia from the memberships' self-conceptions.

The bulk of the information in this study with regard to the homosexual organizations mentioned comes from interviews and letters. In-person and telephone interviews were conducted. Letters were exchanged with various members of the groups noted.

Response to initial letters of inquiry were received from about one dozen homosexual organizations which were located around the country. Several had no dramatic programs. Two or three were in the process of starting dramatic committees or production groups. Others had, indeed, given dramatic presentations and were willing to cooperate in the study. Due to the number of years drama has played a part in the organization, the number of plays presented through 1972, the political/sociological impact of the group, the following organizations were selected for inclusion in this dissertation: The Cockettes; the Gay Activists Alliance of New York City (GAA); the Homosexual Information Center of Los Angeles (HIC); the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles (MCC); ONE, Inc.; the Society for Individual Rights (SIR); the Society of Pat Rocco Enlightened Ehthusiasts (SPREE); and the West Side Discussion Group of New York (WSDG).

Other sources for this dissertation are the commercial plays mentioned, original scripts written specifically for homosexual organizations, various homosexual

publications, and books written by psychologists and one sociologist.

Publications utilized are primarily of a homosexual nature. The Advocate is a homosexual newspaper published in Los Angeles which carried in its masthead the claim "Newspaper of American's Homophile Community." Gay is published in New York City, and, under its original editorship, stated that its purpose was to help "eliminate the isolation and oppression which many people experienced by bringing them a well-rounded, stimulating, and compassionate view of their fellow men."¹⁵ Vector, "A Voice For the Homosexual Community," is published by The Society for Individual Rights in San Francisco. SPREE News Pictorial is a private publication of the Society of Pat Rocco Enlightened Enthusiasts; and The West Sider is published by the West Side Discussion Group of New York City.

The chronological limits of this dissertation will be 1952 and 1972. 1952 is the year during which ONE, Inc., the oldest homosexual group covered in the study, was established. 1972 is the last full year before the writing of this work. The development of dramatic homophobia and the valid homosexual identify are not restricted to these years, but their manifestations are greater during this time period than any other time in United States history.

The dissertation contains five chapters. Chapter One traces the emergence of homophilia on the commercial stage over the past twenty years. Chapter Two deals with the homophobic and homophilic attitudes found in two of the earliest American plays dealing with the homosexual milieu. Chapter Three discusses the eight homosexual organizations' basic philosophies, and how they have utilized the drama to further their stated ends. Chapter Four treats four original scripts which have been produced by homosexual groups. Chapter Five contains a brief summary. One of the original scripts, The Love Thief, is included as an appendix.

Notes

¹"Coming out of the closet" is a phrase used in homosexual jargon to describe someone who is either 1) acknowledging his homosexuality to himself, or 2) acknowledging his homosexuality to the general public.

²Laud Humphreys, Out of the Closets (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 9.

³Donald M. Kaplan, "Homosexuality and American Theatre: A Psychoanalytic Comment," Tulane Drama Review, T27 (Spring, 1965), pp. 25-55.

⁴George Weinberg, Society and the Healthy Homosexual (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972).

⁵Ibid., p. 1. ⁶Ibid., Preface. ⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 86. ⁹Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁰Foster Gunnison, Jr., An Introduction to the Homophile Movement (Hartford, Conn: Institute of Social Ethics, 1967), p. 7n.

¹¹Humphreys, p. 40. This definition is quoted from a book by Lee Rainwater, Behind Ghetto Walls. Mr. Humphreys sees a very close correlation between elements of the black movement, especially in cause and effect, as well as terminology.

¹²Gunnison, p. 28.

¹³Playboy Interview: Tennessee Williams, Playboy, April, 1973, pp. 69-84.

¹⁴Kaplan, op. cit.

¹⁵Gay, December 1, 1969, p. 2. This is from an editorial published in the first edition of the paper.

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The general public has become increasingly aware of the fact of homosexuality in our society. This awareness has been part of a noticeable change in social attitudes toward the homosexual and homosexuality. The change has been a perceptible move from homophobia towards homophilia. American drama has played a role in this change.

This study regards the role of drama in this change from two points: the commercial stage and the way it reflects the prevailing and the changing social attitudes towards homosexuality; and the uses to which various homosexual organizations put drama in order to further their own stated ends, especially with an eye to establishing a valid homosexual identity. This dissertation traces twenty years of the role of drama in the emergence of social homophilia and the developing homosexual identity.

The commercial stage in the early 1950s reflected an unyielding homophobic attitude. This homophobic posture is continued in American drama until the 1960s. In the 1960s homophobia is slowly but surely challenged by homophilic attitudes. By the early 1970s there is no dramatic homophobia which is unchallenged by homophilia. The homophilic attitudes recently depicted are most often presented as indications of a valid homosexual identity.

From 1952 there has been an unbroken line of homosexual organizations in the country whose principal aims have been to educate the public about homosexuality, eradicate homophobic attitudes, and establish a valid homosexual identity.

Most of these organizations acknowledge the potential usefulness of dramatics in achieving these aims; however, only a few have found the drama to be pragmatic in their particular circumstances.

Homosexual organizations have produced plays encompassing a wide range of ideas and interests. Productions have ranged from lavish musicals to 19th-century melodramas to evenings of contemporary one acts. But the most fecund area of homosexual organizational activity in drama lies in the scripts written for production by these groups. These dramas treat of homosexuality without any hint of apology or embarrassment. A valid homosexual identity is fostered in these scripts.

The source material for this dissertation has been selected plays produced commercially in the United States between 1953 and 1972; four scripts, three of which are unpublished, written for the private/semi-private homosexual stage; various homosexually oriented publications; interviews with leaders of some homosexual organizations, and interviews held with actors, directors, producers, and writers participating in various gay groups' dramatic productions; and letters received from some of these men.

CHAPTER ONE

HOMOPHOBIA/HOMOPHILIA ON THE COMMERCIAL STAGE

This chapter deals with the attitudes toward homosexuality presented in contemporary American drama. From 1952 to 1972 attitudes toward homosexuality changed significantly. The plays of the early fifties were predominately homophobic. In the mid-fifties tentative homophilic statements were made. During the sixties homophobia was challenged by homophilia. In the early seventies homophilia supplanted homophobia as the prime attitude reflected in drama.

In addition to the change in attitude toward homosexuality, a change in milieu is discernible. The plays of the 1950s and 1960s were set in a predominately heterosexual environment which was hostile to the homosexual. However, by the late 1960s, the homosexual milieu emerged as a setting, with the result that heterosexual characters were placed in an unfamiliar, sometimes hostile, environment.

The plays to be discussed were selected because they either helped to establish homophobic attitudes, or a significant departure from the established pattern of homophobia, or establish homophilia.

The studies of Dr. George Weinberg (Society and the Healthy Homosexual) and Professor Laud Humphreys (Out of the Closets) provide the basis for the analysis of the change in attitudes in drama toward homosexuality. These works systematically set forth the psychological roots and the resulting social responses of homophobia.

Weinberg's study is based on his work as a psychotherapist. Humphreys, a sociologist, has been active in the homophile movement for several years. He was instrumental in founding a gay organization in St. Louis and has participated in gay demonstrations. Humphreys has written extensively on homosexuality; Out of the Closets is his second book based on his research.¹

Weinberg views homophobia as a prejudicial expression which finds its root in one or more of five basic motives: religion, the secret fear of being homosexual, repressed envy, a threat to societal values, and existence without vicarious immortality.

The religious motive stems from attitudes long present in Judaeo-Christian codes of conduct. The Bible, for example, has been interpreted to contain implicit and explicit strictures against homosexuality. In the Old Testament one of the transgressions of the men of Sodom was that they sought to "know" young men,² and, in Leviticus, the stricture reads, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination."³ Paul wrote further of abominations in his letter to the

Romans. One of these was that "men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another."⁴ The Christian church, in seeking to establish that the only way to gain salvation was to avoid undue pleasure, proscribed homosexuality as being a self-indulgent act. Because sexual pleasure was to be sought only in the pursuit of procreation, the homosexual act was condemned.

The second motive for homophobia is based on a secret fear of being homosexual. A phobic who secretly fears that he is homosexual takes a stance against homosexual expression by others. He fears that that expression by others would lead him into a confrontation with homosexuality that he would not be able to withstand.

Repressed envy, the third homophobic motive, stems from the homophobe's belief that the homosexual's life is unfairly easy. The heterosexual man has to sacrifice a great deal of personal liberty in order to live in society. The wife and child, for example, limit a man's leisure time and the amount of money he can spend on himself. To maintain a masculine appearance, often the heterosexual feels compelled to engage in certain activities, such as hunting or fishing, as worthy masculine pursuits when his interests might lie elsewhere. The homosexual, on the other hand, does not have to maintain these appearances nor forfeit the freedom

necessitated by responsibility to wife and child, yet his daily life and his sexual needs can be as completely satisfied as the heterosexual's. The homophobe cannot accept the homosexual's apparent advantage.

Homosexuality is regarded as a threat to many of society's values because inherently it disdains the family, society's basic organizing element. The homosexual has no need to seek, acquire, and maintain a family. Since persons without this basic need upset the social balances, the self-protective society moves against them to reestablish stability. The more adamant the individual's response is to homosexual threats to social and familiar values, the more homophobic he will be.

One of the manifestations of fear of the unknown is the fear of death. This fear is the basis for the final homophobic motive: fear of existence without vicarious immortality. In his production of children, man manifests a desire to continue his life. Through the child a man's ideas and ideals are implicitly assured a continuing existence. In this way a man can assume a kind of immortality. To a degree his fear of death is thereby assuaged. The homosexual does not generally aspire to children, and seeing this life style reawakens the fear of death in certain heterosexuals. The heterosexual, as a result, becomes homophobic and seeks to suppress the homosexual rather than combat his own fear of death.⁵

These motives cannot always be isolated in the determination of homophobia. Some motives obviously bear on others. The religious motive influences the motive of vicarious immortality; the homophobe's envy of the homosexual's life style might arise from an inability to cope with societal pressures placed on him in order to maintain the value system.

Homophobic devices utilized to suppress homosexuality are much easier to isolate and define. Humphreys describes three methods used to effect suppression of homosexuality: legal-physical, occupational-financial, and ego-destructive.

The legal-physical sanctions arise from an alliance of religious and societal concerns. It has long been recognized that society, which has been concretized into specific institutions, seeks to protect itself to maintain the status quo. Because society has regarded homosexuality as a threat to its institutions, it has sought to suppress the homosexual. Laws restricting homosexuality have been enacted. Some homophobes, aware that legal and religious institutions have proscribed homosexuality, feel a freedom to vent their homophobia physically on the homosexual. Because of implied societal approval of these actions, the homophobe acts with some degree of impunity.

Occupational-financial oppressions appear when the legal-physical oppressions cannot be used. A homosexual

might be fired from many jobs if his homosexuality is discovered. The employment for known homosexuals is often limited. Generally such jobs are low paying and do not carry a great deal of responsibility.

Ego-destructive oppressions make the homosexual feel morally inferior and encourage self-hatred. Such oppressions might be in the form of personal attacks. The effects of legal-physical and occupational-financial oppressions are ego-destructive. The development of a valid identity is virtually impossible under the pressures of ego-destructive oppressions.⁶

Within the chronological limits of this study, Tennessee Williams' Camino Real (1953) is the first American play to present attitudes of homophobia. A strong homophobic statement is embodied in the character of Baron de Charlus. The Baron, a man of morbid desires, is dedicated to the pleasures of the body. But he is inflicted with a deep sense of guilt because of his homosexuality.

The Baron, himself, is homophobic because of religious motivation. The Baron tells us he needs to atone for a sin, which, though it is not identified, is most probably his homosexuality. He seeks some man who will accompany him to his room to assist with his atonement. This man will inflict punishment on the Baron through the use of the instruments which the Baron requires as furnishings in the room, an "iron bed with no

mattress and a considerable length of stout knotted rope. No! Chains this evening, metal chains. I've been very bad, I have a lot to atone for."⁷

Other homophobic elements are implied through imagery and physical oppression. The torture imagery, of an iron bed, rope, and chains implies masochism, a strong abnormalcy which complements the Baron's homophobic self-hatred. The Baron states that his "normalcy has been often subject to question."⁸

Mr. Williams shows the extremity of physical oppression. The circumstances of the Baron's death are a mystery, but the implication is that it was caused by a homophobe. The Baron goes off to seek a man to inflict his penance. Almost immediately we hear a "strangulated outcry." The homophobic statement of the play is complete when the Baron, dead, is pushed across the stage and out of the play.⁹

What homophilic elements there are in the play must be inferred. Homophilia is present only in the absence of homophobic expression from characters with whom the Baron speaks. Kilroy, the protagonist, cannot understand the Baron's strange behavior. A. Ratt, the hotel clerk, treats the Baron's homosexuality with indifference.

The homophobic elements in this drama stem from three motives. The Baron's guilt and self-punishment relate to the religious motive. A threat to social

values is suggested through the Baron's disdainful attitude. And the Baron has little regard for his ultimate fate, which stirs homophobic fears of mortality. The climax of homophobia in this play is manifested in the death of the Baron.¹⁰

Robert Anderson's Tea and Sympathy (1953) might seem to treat the theme of homosexuality with sympathy and understanding. The play, however, is rife with homophobia, though it contains no overt homosexuality and only one implied homosexual character.

The homophobic elements in this play are provoked by two instances in the life of Tom Lee. He was seen, nude, on a swimming trip with a teacher, Mr. Harris, a suspected homosexual. Subsequently Tom tried unsuccessfully to prove his manhood with Ellie Martin, the town tramp. Because of these instances, most of the others in the play believe that Tom is homosexual. Their conclusion is based upon circumstantial evidence and buttressed by their personal prejudices.

The principal homophobes are Tom's father, Herb Lee, and his housemaster, Bill Reynolds. Herb's homophobic responses are motivated by threats to his values. Bill reacts out of fear that he is a latent homosexual.

Herb Lee expresses overt and covert homophobia. His overt manifestations rest on his frustrated desire to inflict physical harm on Harris--"to punch his face for him."¹¹ What is of greater importance to him,

though, is Herb's overriding concern with the impact of Tom's predicament on his own social standing:

Look, [Tom], this isn't easy for me. Stop thinking about yourself and give me a break. I suppose you think it's going to be fun for me to have to live this [swimming incident] down back home. It'll get around, and it'll affect me, too.¹²

Because of Tom's "eccentricities," Mr. Lee is unsure of his son's "normalcy." Tom is quiet, likes music, has long hair, has an unusual walk, takes female roles in school dramas, and is a tennis champion through craft rather than the preferable strength. Mr. Lee forces the boy to take steps which will curb the talk which is going around: "Get your hair cut. And then . . . tell them you're not playing this lady whatever her name is [in the school play]."¹³

Mr. Lee's attitude after Tom's liaison with Ellie Martin is one of resignation that both their reputations are ruined: "But to go and do a thing like this and leave no doubts . . . it's what the others will think . . . Added to the Harris business. And that's all that's important. What they'll think."¹⁴ Mr. Lee views the damage done to his value system as beyond repair.

The motivation for Bill Reynolds' homophobia is carefully developed as the secret fear of being a homosexual. The first reference to Bill in the play characterizes him as a very masculine person, but there is subtle evidence that he is also a misogynist. One of the faculty wives tells Bill's wife, Laura, that she,

according to the school boys, has been "in and out of bed with every single master in the school," but never with Bill. The implication is that Bill was somehow above it all, and only interested in asexual masculine activities. The faculty wife adds, "Bill never gave me a second glance. He was all the time organizing teams, planning Mountain Club outings."¹⁵ There is also an implication that Bill was reluctant to marry. After hearing "even though we gave him an awful ribbing, we all expected him to come back a bachelor," Laura says, "You make it sound as though you kidded him into marrying."¹⁶

Before Bill first appears, he is portrayed as a man who is so concerned with masculine activities that the schoolboys' gossip never associated him with a woman. Indeed, the most flirtatious wife among his associates admits he paid very little attention to her. Bill assumes the attributes of a twentieth century Hippolytus: his masculinity is never questioned, but it has allowed little room for sexuality in his life.

Bill's first appearance in the play reinforces this concept of sexual asceticism. He enters with a student, discussing plans for the summer at a lodge. His diction indicates the type of masculine values to which he aspires and what he thinks are important elements in obtaining these values. Key phrases such as "you get along with [others]," "regular guy," and "we

can make that [repair job] your project,"¹⁷ at once imply that getting along with someone makes a regular guy, one who is okay to be around, and that putting things in good repair is a desirable manly occupation. The female is not mentioned in Bill's plans; his thought process is geared strictly to masculine activity.

In addition to his masculine activities, Bill establishes his ability to stand alone without the help of a woman—further evidence of misogyny. Laura remembers a tender moment in Italy and interprets it as an expression of Bill's need for help. He scoffs at that interpretation:

LAURA. I think you're ashamed . . . that you ever let me see you needed help. That night in Italy, in some vague way you cried out . . .

BILL. What is the matter with you today? Me crying out for help.¹⁸

In his opening conversation with Laura, Bill manifests his homophobia through his discussion of the swimming scene and his opinions of Harris and Tom. Laura senses his discomfort, and when she presses him for details, he says, "Nothing very pretty . . . Well, they finally caught up with Harris . . . Just to talk about it is disgusting." Bill assumes that the nude scene was overtly homosexual. In the face of not being able to substantiate the assumption, he says, "With a man like Harris, it's conclusive enough." Since he has no facts upon which to base his conclusion, Bill's

overreaction to the scene and to Harris is somewhat startling. His diatribe includes Tom's involvement and presumed guilt. "I think he should be kicked out. I think you've got to let people know the school doesn't stand for even a hint of this sort of thing. He should be booted."¹⁹

Bill's prejudice against Tom is rooted in the disparity between their values. Tom is described by Bill as an "off-horse" because he doesn't readily fit into the masculine world created by Bill and his youthful associates. Tom does not mind playing the part of Lady Teazle in the school play. He does not like to go mountain climbing or want to manage one of the sports teams, much less join one. Tom is not, therefore, a "regular guy" in Bill's eyes. He is a threat to the values of the masculine community.

/At first Bill defends his prejudice against Tom with the flimsiest of evidence. "Tom's always been an off-horse. And now it's quite obvious why . . . Look at the way he walks, the way he sometimes stands." When pressed by Laura for a more substantial reason, he reacts viscerally: "A man knows a queer when he sees one."²⁰

Tom and Laura recognize that Bill's response to Tom is antagonistic. Initially, Bill's motives are misinterpreted. Tom thinks that Bill's feelings are prompted by the frustrations of failure:

He hates me because he made a flop of me. I know all about it. My father put me in this house when I first came here, and when he left he said to your husband, "Make a man out of him." He's failed, and he's mad . . .²¹

Bill would, of course, react negatively to the thought, or the fact, of failure. His whole concept of life is dependent upon the accomplishment of goals. He is even disappointed when his mountain-climbing club decides to return to the school rather than continue on in the rain.

Laura at first believes that Bill's "vindictive attitude" is a result of anger and jealousy. But by the end of the play, she has determined that there is another reason for Bill's actions: Bill probably has homosexual tendencies himself, which he has worked very hard to suppress. When she states this, she destroys their marriage and shakes Bill's self-concept:

LAURA. [quietly, almost afraid to say it]. Did it ever occur to you that you persecute in Tom, that boy up there, you persecute in him the thing you fear in yourself? [BILL looks at her for a long moment of hatred. She has hit close to the truth he has never let himself be conscious of. There is a moment when he might hurt her, but then he draws away, still staring at her. He backs away, slowly, and then turns to the door.] Bill!

BILL. [not looking at her]. I hope you will be gone when I come back from dinner.

LAURA. I will be . . . Oh, Bill, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that . . . it was cruel. This was the weakness you cried out for me to save you from, wasn't it. . .²²

Both Mr. Lee and Bill respond to the play's homosexual implications out of self-interest. Tom's father is clearly more upset by the thought of his loss of face

among peers, and Tom's failure to live up to his concept of masculinity, than by the implications of homosexuality on Tom's life. Bill must destroy all vestiges of homosexuality in his environs in order to protect the facade of masculinity which he has constructed around his own possible homosexuality.

Each of the social oppressions is present in the play, but the legal-physical and the occupational-financial are not as developed as the ego-destructive.

Legal-physical oppression is manifested in two separate instances in the play when the masculine ego seeks to physically dominate the "inferior" male: The first occurs as Ralph, a bully, slaps Tom around and demeans his masculinity when Tom tries to stop him from peeping on a woman who is breast feeding her baby.²³ The second occurs in a dialogue between Mr. Lee, Bill, and Laura. Herb wants to hit Harris; the Reynolds' silence gives tacet approval to Herb's wish.²⁴

Occupational oppression occurs early in the play. Before the audience clearly understands what is going to take place, Harris informs us that he will not be reappointed to the school because of the swimming incident. Reference to this type of oppression occurs again when Mr. Lee Asks, "What was a guy like Harris doing at the school?" Bill, agreeing that even a suspected homosexual should not be on the staff, answers, "I tried to tell them."²⁵ Occupational oppression is also

manifested in Mr. Lee's statement to Tom regarding the futility of attempting to clear Harris' name. Tom asserts, "Harris did nothing," but Mr. Lee retorts, "He's not going to be reappointed next year. Nothing you can say is going to change anyone's mind."²⁶ Mr. Lee is not willing to let his son risk his reputation by coming to the defense of an alleged homosexual, though Tom's testimony might lead to Harris' reinstatement.

The major presentation of social oppression of homosexuality deals with ego-destructive attempts of Mr. Lee and Bill. They want to change Tom's personality and reshape his habits.

The reason for Mr. Lee's attempts at ego-destruction are twofold. He, of course, is concerned by the alleged homosexual situation in which his son is discovered. However, his primary motivé is the threat to his values which is rooted in Tom's behavior. He refuses to allow Tom to lead a life which does not reflect his own personal values. He will not allow Tom to become a folk singer. "I'll be damned if I'll tell [my friends] he wants to be a singer of folk songs."²⁷ He becomes obstinate in his determination to change Tom. In spite of the objections of others, he decides to leave Tom in school in an attempt to flush out the boy's undesirable propensities. "Let him stick it out. It'll be a good lesson . . . Oh, he'll take some

kidding. He'll have to work extra hard to prove to them he's . . . well, manly. It may be the thing that brings him to his senses."²⁸ In this respect, Bill and Mr. Lee have a similar motive. The two men have decided that nothing less than a major shock will suffice to rid Tom of the characteristics which annoy them. Bill says, "If he's kicked out, maybe it'll bring him to his senses."²⁹

The attempts to destroy Tom's ego very nearly succeed. As a result of the pressures of his father, Bill, and his schoolmates, as well as his inability to have sex with Ellie Martin, Tom becomes convinced of his homosexuality. "I'm no man. Ellie knows it. Everybody knows it. It seems everybody knew it, except me. And now I know it."³⁰

As in Camino Real, there is no espousal of homophilia in Tea and Sympathy. In this play, too, there is but one homosexual, though evidence of his homosexuality is more inferential than explicit. Harris had been brought face to face with homophobia at the time of his dismissal. Rather than stand upon his rights, he accepts being fired and states that he might have acted with more discretion. This is not a homophilic attitude. Homophilia has no champion in these 1953 dramas.

In early 1954, the first American play to present an avowed homophile, Ruth and Augustus Goetz' The

Immoralist, opened on Broadway. In part it makes a positive statement about homosexuality. Homophilia, absent in Tea and Sympathy and negligible in Camino Real, is present in The Immoralist, but it is far outweighed by homophobia.

The Immoralist must be judged a homophobic play, even though it is easy to infer that the Goetzes probably intended to write a homophilic play. This inference lies in the fact that they sought permission from André Gide, a homosexual, to adapt his book for a dramatic presentation.

Gide himself was dubious about the undertaking. Because he knew contemporary theatre practice, he doubted that The Immoralist would survive a transition to the stage. "I don't see how it is possible to do such a story. In the theatre homosexuality is always a false accusation, never a fact of life."³¹

The Goetzes obtained permission for the adaptation by assuring Gide that they would write a play which would treat of homosexuality as a fact. This would be done by portraying an avowed homosexual and the unfairness of prevailing social attitudes. The Goetzes would "probe into the consciousness" of the audience.³²

Given this protest by Gide and the implied assurance of probity made by the Goetzes, The Immoralist had the potential to be a strong homophilic play. But it is not. In spite of some advocated homophilia, the

protagonist finally denounces his homosexuality and takes steps to live his life as a homophobe.

The play treats of Michel, a latent homosexual who has, in a desperate effort to suppress his propensities, married his childhood friend, Marcelline. During an extended working honeymoon in northern Africa, he meets Bachir, a young Arab prostitute and houseboy and Moktir, an educated homosexual who has deliberately changed his life to avoid homophobic oppressions.

Michel, with the help of Moktir, is able to accept his own homosexuality, but at the cost of his marriage. He sends Marcelline, whom he does not know is pregnant, back to their home in France. There she undergoes the ordeal of pregnancy and separation, tormented by her brother, Robert, who had opposed the marriage and who now villifies Michel because of his homosexuality.

Michel, however, cannot bear to live alone with his homosexuality. He comes to Marcelline, and, after learning of her pregnancy, begs understanding and tolerance, and they are reconciled.

The character of Moktir embodies the Goetzes' homophilic point of view. Moktir has chosen to live a life of comparative solitude in a small date orchard rather than to continue as a teacher at a university where he was subjected to shameful situations which reflect the ignorance, aversion, and pain felt by a homosexual encountering homophobes.

Moktir's importance to this study lies in the fact that he is the first homophilic homosexual in American drama in the 1950s. He is the first character to refute homophobic motives and to present a valid homosexual identity. His importance is especially vital when it is compared with the abnegation implicit in the earlier homosexual characters of Baron de Charlus and David Harris.

Moktir argues against Michel's homophobic morality, which has a religious base. When Michel confronts Moktir's homosexuality, "Everything I have been taught tells me what you are is wrong," Moktir answers with an appeal to reason, an appeal against the arguments of religious stricture: "Wrong! How can a man of science use such a word! My instincts are a part of nature."³³ Moktir's speech asserts that a man should reason with facts rather than emotions when dealing with homosexuality. Michel, or anyone, should not judge inclinations to be wrong when such inclinations are a part of the nature of man. This reasoning is diametrically opposed to the Christian doctrine of considering selfishly pleasurable sex acts sinful. To the homosexual Moktir, "sin" is something contrary only to natural order, and, because he regards homosexuality as natural, homosexual acts are not sinful.³⁴

Moktir also argues against the fear of existence without vicarious immortality. He rejects the concept

of living in the present for future ends. He is a natural being, living now and shaping his life according to his natural inclinations:

[MOKTIR]. My instincts are a part of nature.

MICHEL. That is not true!

MOKTIR. How can you judge what is true for me? I must do that for myself, and I have only a short time on this earth in which to be myself. For me only the present exists.³⁵

Moktir has strength and pride, and he refuses further association with Michel when it becomes clear his friend is bent on deceiving Marcelline and living in self-abnegation:

MOKTIR. You have not deceived [Marcelline]. You have deceived yourself.

MICHEL. I have to help her! Don't go! Help me, Moktir!

MOKTIR. It is dishonor to live two lives! I return to my own life. I deceive no one. I corrupt no one. Do you think that because I am what I am I have no morality? Do you think that because you have come to our life, you will be able to live without any?

MICHEL. I must help her!

MOKTIR. Your power to help her is not great. You hide behind her. You use her. The only way you could help her is to spare her what is coming--you should bear that alone!

MICHEL. No! No! I will not be alone! I cannot lose her! I cannot live as you do!

MOKTIR. You harm us all.³⁶

Moktir leaves the play at this point, maintaining his dignity, refusing to live in self-recrimination. He embodies a strong, valid identity. He is infused with dignity and self-respect.

These instances of homophilia are infrequent in the play, and they do not constitute a formidable presentation against the homophobic manifestations found in the script. The Goetzes briefly allow Michel homophilic attitudes, but finally he, too, responds to his enculturated homophobias and gives up his homosexual life.

The Immoralist touches on all of Weinberg's motives for homophobia: Michel and his father view homosexuality as sinful; Marcelline is envious of Mektir's ease with her husband and their obviously beneficial friendship; Michel desperately seeks vicarious immortality; Robert and Michel both view homosexuality as a threat to their values; and, most importantly, Michel has an internal loathing that he might be homosexual.

The device upon which the play begins its homophobic movement has a religious motive. In his father's Will, Michel is threatened with the loss of his inheritance, "should the propriety of [his] behavior" warrant.³⁷ The reason for this unusual condition is that his father was a moral man, and his son had sinned grievously as a child. At the age of eleven, Michel was expelled from school because of a homosexual act. The father was so frightened by the sin that he never trusted Michel to be away from him for any length of time. As Michel says, the will indicated that "in the

end he believed that I must always be guilty of the things he suspected."³⁸

Marcelline reflects the heterosexual's envy of the homosexual life style. Her plight is a difficult one. She is not aware of Michel's homosexuality and what it means to their relationship. She cannot understand why Michel rejects her physical love. And she is further disturbed by the comaraderie between Michel and Moktir. She feels herself being pushed out of Michel's life. She is envious of the ease which Moktir and Michel have established. She is uncomfortable in not being able to give her husband what Moktir can give him. "Moktir is more helpful than I . . . When I sit there with you and Moktir, I feel completely unnecessary."³⁹ She is driven to drink to assuage her envy and feeling of alienation.

The fear of an existence without vicarious immortality, which is the threat posed in facing the reality of a finite existence, is present in two separate instances in the play. As has been noted, Moktir scorns the concept of living for the future, but Michel rejects this premise of living merely for the present. He rejects Moktir's solitude, Moktir's mortality.

Second, at the end of the play, Michel, prompted by a need for vicarious immortality, seeks reconciliation with Marcelline. He acknowledges that he has destroyed much of what she had hoped for in him, but

he asks her to give him, and their marriage, another chance. He believes that the child which she is carrying offers him an opportunity to live again: "Marceline, I know that what I destroyed in you I cannot ask for, but the child is another chance at life--And the important thing is to live."⁴⁰

Robert's behavior throughout the play is indicative of a homophobe stirred to action by threats to his value system. He views Michel as a young man who does not fit into the proper mold for their life in the country. Michel doesn't court his sister in the proper fashion; he spends too much time alone. Robert echoes Bill Reynolds' classification of Tom Lee with his own description of Michel, "He is an eccentric, and I don't like eccentrics!"⁴¹ When Robert learns of the nature of Michel's eccentricity, he is adamant that Marcelline stay away from her husband. "I will not let her stay under the same roof with him . . . She can come back--when it's clean!"⁴²

Michel manifests the homophobe's defense of societal values in his first meeting with Moktir. He is taken aback by Moktir's unexpected appearance. His first impulse is to insult and reject the admitted homosexual. Moktir represents the life that Michel has been trying desperately to avoid. He cannot bear Moktir's proximity. "I am sorry. I come from a different culture . . . and I am bound by the same

standards I was brought up with--"⁴³ Moktir's presence stirs Michel's phobias and presents a threat to his culture and his family name, his fortune and his marriage. He tries to protect his marriage; he does not want Marcelline to have any inkling of his problem, "My wife will be back here any moment. I would prefer that you leave."⁴⁴

The most compelling homophobic motive in the play is generated by Michel's fear of facing his own homosexuality. This motive has proved to be a catalyst all of his life. As a result of the "sin" he committed as a boy of eleven, Michel has lived in fear that this incident was indicative of homosexual proclivity. In an attempt to restructure his life, he patterns himself after his father so that he might suppress his own ego in favor of one more acceptable to his culture. He fails, and his father dies doubting Michel's motives in this life-long dedication. Michel's father leaves this doubt behind him. After the reading of the will, Michel is convinced that he was a failure at hiding his homosexuality, and that anyone could see it in him: "How can I believe anything else? That [belief] is his legacy to me."⁴⁵ In another effort to suppress his desires, he marries Marcelline on an impulse, even though he acknowledges that at the moment he does not love her as a husband should love a wife. "Marcie, I will love you . . . I know I will!"⁴⁶ For a brief time

Michel believes that he has finally satisfied this pressing need to resolve his fears.

Michel's fears are reawakened when he meets Bachir. The servant boy presents a very real threat to Michel's masculinity because he implies a mutual homosexual recognition. Bachir dances sensuously to please Michel. Michel has not yet consummated the marriage, so his "masculinity" is still in doubt. Michel, disturbed by the temptation, orders the boy from the house.

Michel finally confronts homosexuality in his first meeting with Moktir. His first reaction is one of rejection. As soon as he learns that Moktir is the owner of the orchard where life is lead "without women--only boys and men . . . Beautiful men,"⁴⁷ Michel says coldly, "I have heard of you. I want nothing from you."⁴⁸

Because of his fear of being homosexual, Michel gives up an independent life, exiles himself from his culture, and insults a learned man for whom he otherwise would have had a very high esteem. His homophobia is costly in terms of freedom of personal choice.

As in Tea and Sympathy, the three methods of social oppression are dramatized in The Immoralist. Bachir, in following his role as a young homosexual prostitute, is beaten and jailed (legal-physical). Moktir feels forced to abandon his teaching profession, and Michel is threatened with the loss of his inheritance (occupational-financial). It is, however, the homophobic

efforts at ego-destruction which concern the play for the most part.

Michel suffers a constant barrage of ego-destructive elements, some self-inflicted. The shameful humiliation which he suffers began at the school the day he was expelled:

That morning as the teachers packed my boxes, they threw my clothing in as if it were infected. Then they walked me through the courtyard at the recess so that everybody could watch me leave. I was alone on the earth. I have never been able to make my way back.⁴⁹

It has already been noted that Michel made himself subservient to his father, but the will implied that the old man could not forgive and forget. This was not lost on Michel: "The more I tried to appease him, the less he trusted me. In the end he believed that I must always be guilty of the things he suspected. Otherwise, why had I tried so hard to please him?"⁵⁰ Not only was the father unforgiving, he was determined to make one last try at controlling his son's behavior, and he threatened disinheritance should Michel revert to homosexuality.

Later, when it seemed that his marriage was doomed, Michel deliberately put himself in a position to be degraded. In a letter to Robert he admits his homosexuality; he urges Marcelline to tell everyone, "Don't spare me! Tell the truth."⁵¹ This plea from Michel marks the moment of success of the ego-destructive effort.

It is ironic that the homophobic degradation inflicted on Michel resulted in the destruction of the homophobe, yet gave rise to the homophile. At this point Michel embraces for a time the fact of his homosexuality and the life of a homosexual:

I will never be silent again! Whoever knows me will know that about me first. Whoever hears of me, will hear that before anything! If there is an ounce of energy within me, I will say what I am like! This one thing I can do! I can speak out!⁵²

The motive of this speech might be homophobic, but the effect is homophilic. Although he says this in a desire to keep others from making the same marital mistake, the thought is unmistakably that of a homophile. For a brief moment Michel thinks the same as Moktir.

It appears that the Goetzes have created a stage character, Judaeo-Christian encultured, who accepts homosexuality in himself, and who is willing to proclaim it. Their homophilic statement is weakened, however, by linking Michel's homophilic profession to a sense of homophobia. The play's homophilic argument is further weakened by Michel's ultimate reversion to homophobia.

The denouement of The Immoralist is inconsistent with the Goetzes' implied purpose. In light of the fact that Gide reportedly proclaimed his own homosexuality,⁵³ he was probably implying portrayal of homophilic homosexuality when he lamented the lack of dramatic homosexuality as a "fact of life." The Goetzes

sought to reassure him that they would do justice to his work. However, Michel attempts to mollify Marceline so that she will allow him to remain with her and her unborn child. He renounces the initial emotional happiness he found as a homosexual. He recalls the misery he encountered in his recent journeys, and he promises to try to push homosexuality out of his life if she will help: "there is no place on earth where those who are like me will not seek me out. Only here in this house where I was raised, can I shut them out."⁵⁴

Eric Bentley castigated the Goetzes for not resolving the problem they posed:

The question has been: what can a homosexual husband do--assuming that his wife loves him and that he needs her affection? The answer proffered in the last scene of the play is that he can do without homosexuality! Or can he? This is modern drama. We can end, if we like, with a question mark. What the Goetzes don't seem to have realized is that this is not to ask a question but to beg one--and that, the main question of their play . . . The goal the Goetzes were making for was the open presentation of homosexuality and the open advocacy of a humane attitude to it. Up to now, as Gide told them in an interview, homosexuality in the theatre has been an accusation . . . Its standard form at present is, in fact, the unjust accusation; for our public has reached the point where it will allow the subject of homosexuality to come up, provided that the stigma is removed before the end of the evening. Our public's motto is: tolerance--provided there is nothing to tolerate . . . In short, the Goetzes stuck on a final scene that [is] last minute conformism.⁵⁵

In spite of these faults, The Immoralist is a landmark work, for it is one of the first dramas to pit homophilia against homophobia. After The Immoralist,

though, the plays of the 1950s portray homosexuals as objects of scorn, despair, or death. For the most part, the homophobic attitudes manage to obscure the slow progress of homophilia in dramatic expression.

Tennessee Williams maintained his previous homophobic attitudes, mixed with themes of guilt and self-punishment, in Cat On A Hot Tin Roof (1955). In this play Williams utilized homophobia as character traits of Brick Pollitt.

Brick's lifelong friend, Skipper, fell in love with him and turned to him for help. Brick rejected the thought of a physical love between them as an aberration, and Skipper destroyed himself with liquor and drugs. Brick's rejection was more influential in causing Skipper's death than the fact that Skipper could not bear to live as a homosexual.

In a scene between Brick and his father, we learn of the homophobic cruelty which forced Skipper to his destruction:

BRICK: Yes--I left out a long-distance call which I had from Skipper, in which he made a drunken confession to me and on which I hung up!--last time we spoke to each other in our lives . . .

BIG DADDY: You hung up?

BRICK: Hung up. Jesus! Well--

BIG DADDY: Anyhow now!--we have tracked down the lie with which you're so disgusted and which you are drinking to kill your disgust with, Brick. You been passing the buck. This disgust

with mendacity is disgust with yourself . . . you--dug the grave of your friend and kicked him in it!--before you'd face the truth with him!

BRICK: His truth, not mine!⁵⁶

Brick's inability to face that truth was based on the masculine image which he had cultivated for the greater part of his life. He and Skipper were "sexy" football heroes; women flocked to them. They had worked very hard to cultivate and maintain this identity, and Brick was very protective of it. Weinberg suggests a reason for Brick's protective response:

After years of struggle to achieve a precarious masculine identity, many heterosexual men feel threatened by the sight of homosexuals, who appear to them to be disdainful of the basic requirements of manhood.⁵⁷

It is clear that Brick was such a heterosexual, that homosexuality threatened the importance of his masculine attributes. When exposed to Skipper's homosexuality, Brick rejects him for reasons of self-preservation, regardless of the cost to Skipper. Brick felt so threatened by Skipper's homosexuality that he contributed strongly to the destruction of the ego of his lifelong friend by cutting off all relationship between them.

In Camino Real Williams' homophilic attitudes could only be inferred from the lack of overt homophobia on the part of some heterosexuals. In Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, however, he does make a positive homophilic statement through Big Daddy Pollitt. Big Daddy

acknowledges his debt to the homosexual lovers who gave him his start, and he refuses to pass judgment on the relationship shared by Brick and Skipper: "One thing you can grow on a big place more than cotton!-- is tolerance!--I grown it."⁵⁸ In spite of Big Daddy's homophilia, though, homophobia is the predominate attitude toward homosexuality in the play. Williams does not make Cat On A Hot Tin Roof a homophilic statement.

Arthur Miller's A View From the Bridge (1955) presents an example of Gide's "false accusation" theory: Homophobic attitudes are present, although there is no actual homosexuality or a homosexual in the play. Miller shows us how easily a man can label an enemy as a homosexual, simply by forcing attention to certain traits which have become indicative of the "typical" homosexual.

Eddie Carbone has a strong dislike for Rodolfo, his ward's fiancé. In order to discredit him, Eddie imputes homosexuality on some of his characteristics. Eddie manufactures homosexuality out of qualities that are generally considered effeminate: color of hair, sewing, high-pitched singing voice. ". . . he's like a chorus girl or sump'n . . . I just hope that [is] his regular [blond] hair . . . one-two-three, he makes a new dress."⁵⁹ When Rodolfo sings in his tenor voice, "you wouldn't be lookin' for him you be lookin' for her."⁶⁰ During a fight Eddie grabs Rodolfo and kisses

him on the lips, and later claims, "Somebody that don't want [to be kissed] can break it. He didn't give me the right kind of fight. I know it."⁶¹ But it is a false accusation. Rodolfo is not a homosexual.

However, a stereotypical picture of a homosexual is delineated in A View From the Bridge: A homosexual is a platinum blond young man with a high pitched singing voice who is better able to fashion dresses than to be a stevedore.

Meyer Levin's Compulsion (1957) illustrates elements of homophobia and public ignorance about homosexuality. The play shows how actions of a homosexual can be construed as a threat to society's values. It presents a view of the reactionary, oppressive attitudes regarding homosexuality. It also pictures the public's general lack of understanding of the nature of homosexuality.

The play dramatizes the role homosexuality played in the Leopold-Loeb murder case. The homosexual Judd is portrayed as arrogant and calculating. His disdainful manner presents a threat to social values, especially his casual attitude toward the sanctity of life. Judd declares, "Man must be the master of himself, of his fate!"⁶² [The murder] was an experiment to create a chain of events to prove that we were the complete masters of our deeds! Masters of life and death."⁶³

Wilk, the defense lawyer, tries to show that homosexuality of itself poses a threat by warping normal behavior. The implication is that homosexuality can cloud the mind and personality of the most intellectual person and warp his judgment. He suggests that the real motivation for Judd's part in the slaying was his obsession with his friend, Artie. "You didn't want to lose your friend. Wasn't that what drove you? Wasn't it?"⁶⁴

Compulsion also illustrates the homophobe's vindictive attitude toward homosexuality as well as an irresponsible immaturity which some ascribe to it. The following dialogue points out these attitudes. Some wish to eradicate homosexuals; others treat homosexuality as a schoolboy experiment.

WILK: People want to hang them if only because of the homosexuality.

MAX: But the coroner swore it wasn't in the crime.

JAMES: Why, as much as they did, every English school boy--

WILK: Still, it's a taboo. People feel threatened, and they hang.⁶⁵

Levin brings out the ignorance of the heterosexual with regard to the fundamental nature of homosexuality. Some heterosexuals feel homosexuality can be eliminated by the "right" woman. Ruth, a girl who likes Judd, urges him to seek "a normal life. A man and a woman."⁶⁶ Later, she states, "If they could only

see--he's not a--If they just don't murder him because they think he's abnormal. Doctor, I don't understand about Judd and Artie. He's like any boy. He needed--oh, a girl's affection."⁶⁷

Compulsion presents homophobic attitudes and heterosexual ignorance about homosexuality. The only instance of homophilia, the remark about English schoolboys, is negated by its presentation in connection with youthful activities. This renders homosexuality void of adult moral responsibility. In this play attempts at understanding Judd either deny his homosexuality or render it irresponsible.

A growing youth-based homophilia is indicated by Shelagh Delaney's A Taste of Honey (1958).⁶⁸ Younger playwrights, such as Delaney, Edward Albee, and Terrence McNally, often imply a different attitude than older playwrights in their presentation of homosexuality. They consistently include homophilic attitudes when homosexuality is part of their plays' structures.

Geoffrey, the homosexual in A Taste of Honey, is the object of some homophobic attitudes. Some of these attitudes are subtle; Jo, his roommate, likes and understands him, but she resists his influence. Other attitudes are not so subtle: Helen, Jo's mother, overpowers him and forces him out of Jo's life; Peter, Helen's lover, scorns him. While Jo accepts him as a homosexual, Helen and Peter are far less tolerant.

Although they do not want to "hang" him, they attack him with ego-destructive epithets such as "that little fruit-cake parcel"⁶⁹ and "Bloody little pansy."⁷⁰

Geof is the first Judaeo-Christian homosexual in a drama about heterosexuals who does not deny or in any way excuse his homosexuality. But he is not a strong statement of a valid homosexual identity. He is generous and unselfish, but he is not aggressive nor is he assertive enough to counter the hostility and disdain of Helen. With little resistance he allows himself to be driven from the life he and Jo have set up together. Geof's last speech indicates his futility in dealing with strong women and his concern for Jo's welfare: "the one thing civilization couldn't do anything about--women. Good-bye Jo, and good luck."⁷¹

Tennessee Williams, in Suddenly Last Summer (1958), depicts another homophobic homosexual, Sebastian Venable, and he shows homophobic concepts of homosexuality which indicate that homosexual behavior is a threat to social values. The actions of Sebastian and the reactions of his family are indicative of the manner in which threats to society can be influenced by homosexuality. Normative attitudes toward life, sex, and respect for the dead mutate from exposure to homosexuality. This play deals with a homosexual influence on personal behavior, murder, suicide, pimping, and cannibalism.

Although Sebastian does not appear on stage, Mr. Williams paints a compelling picture of a man who uses those who love him; a man who is both vain about his personal appearance yet self-destructive. Sebastian the homosexual is utilitarian towards his family. Sebastian the homophobe is destructive towards himself.

Sebastian used his mother and his cousin, Catharine, to attract handsome, young males whom he would then seduce. Catharine says, "I was PROCURING for him! She [Mrs. Venable] used to do it, too!"⁷²

Sebastian was vain and followed a stern regimen in his slavish desire to maintain the appearance of youth. Mrs. Venable saw this regimen as strength of character: "It takes character to refuse to grow old, Doctor-- successfully to refuse to. It calls for discipline, abstention."⁷³

Sebastian's health paid for his discipline, however. He became dependent on pills. But the pills were unable to provide him with the necessary vitality for maintaining himself physically and emotionally. Catharine states, "I told you Cousin Sebastian wasn't well. He was popping those little white pills in his mouth. I think he had popped in so many of them that they made him feel weak."⁷⁴ Sebastian was caught in a destructive round robin.

The most destructive element Williams portrays in this play is in Sebastian's desire for death.

Sebastian had some sort of self-sacrificial regard of himself, which Williams mysteriously ties in with the character's concept of God:

DOCTOR: Save him from what?

CATHARINE: Completing!--a sort of!--image!--he had of himself as a sort of!--sacrifice to a--terrible sort of a--

DOCTOR: --God?

CATHARINE: Yes, a--cruel one, Doctor!⁷⁵

In spite of Catharine's efforts to save him, Sebastian met with a most gruesome cannibalistic death at the hands of the same young boys he had seduced.

Williams' last play of the decade maintains his earlier homophobic attitudes. It is also in line with the prevailing attitude of society regarding homosexuality: Perversion, a threat to the fabric of society, reaps an unspeakable harvest.

The last drama of the 1950s which presents a homophobic attitude is Edward Albee's The Zoo Story.⁷⁶ In the play Albee links homosexuality with Jerry, a man who cannot meet the demands made upon him by society. He cannot bear to live without the wife, children, pets, and possessions of the Peters of the world. He cannot even commit suicide without the help of someone else.

Homosexuality is a significant, but not primary, part of Jerry's character. Although he disclaims his one teen-age homosexual act, he does refer to the

liaison as the only time he might have been "very much in love."⁷⁷

Phallic associations in the play also indicate the influence of homosexuality on Jerry. He commits suicide by impaling himself on a knife held by Peter. The implication of the phallic knife and the word "peter," often a slang euphemism for penis, cannot be ignored. The play does not deal with homosexuality on the surface, but it does deal with it in abstractions. The homophobia implied by Jerry's social despair and his phallic suicide is the last to be expressed in American drama in the decade of the 1950s.

Clearly the attitude toward homosexuality in the drama of the fifties was predominately homophobic. Homosexuality was depicted as a threat to social values on many levels--religious, personal, and cultural. Alcoholism and abuse of drugs, weakness of character, masochism, suicide, murder, and cannibalism are just a few of the many unsavory aspects of life associated with homosexuality in the drama of the decade. The sixties, however, were to evince a significant change in attitude toward the homosexual and homosexuality. Homophilia emerges strongly in American drama during the following decade.

Lorraine Hansberry, in The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window (1964), reflects the aforementioned

liberalism toward homosexuality which finds espousal in the works of youthful writers.

The character David Ragin is the first American homosexual homophile. Ragin truly accepts himself as a homosexual, and he rejects the various forms of social oppression and motives of homophobia. David maintains himself with dignity. Acceptance of homosexuality is preferable to imposing the values of others on himself. And the play does not minimize David's "perversions," neither does it have him destroy himself.

Sidney Brustein is probably the first truly complete heterosexual homophile in American drama. In the presentation of homophilic attitudes, Sidney is far more important than David. His homophilia is objective. He does not insult David's homosexuality, and he does not allow others to do so. Nor does he allow David to impute homosexual tendencies on those who express homophobia:

Come on, David! Don't start that jazz with me tonight. Is that the best you can do? I mean it! Is that really it? Anybody who attacks one--is one? Can it, boy! . . . I mean it. I have had it with that bit. I am bored with the syndrome.⁷⁸

There are several attempts at ego-destructive oppression in this play. Alton calls David "fag face" and "Queer."⁷⁹ Gloria labels him "a sick little boy."⁸⁰ Wally touches on the cliché of the alleged homosexual mother fixation: "What's weighing you down, David?--

some problem or other about your mother?"⁸¹ But none of these instances appear to be homophobic as such so much as they are attacks on one human being by another human being. They are merely means of striking at a vulnerable spot. David parries each attack either through jibes of his own or an aloof disregard of the statement.

The type of homophobia portrayed in the dramas of the 1950s is virtually absent in The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window. In fact homophilia is uncompromisingly asserted by the play's protagonist. Such presentation is indicative of the dramas to follow. While homophobia is not always afforded such little attention, there is a good deal of homophilia to balance, or offset homophobic attitudes.

Edward Albee's Tiny Alice (1965) treats homophobic attitudes in much the same fashion as does The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window. Homophobic references are not so much attacks prompted by homophobia as they are probings for a vulnerable spot in the defense of two antagonists.

The Cardinal and the Lawyer parry with homosexual references, but neither can gain an advantage through this device, so the subject is dropped. The Cardinal remembers that as a child in school the Lawyer was called a hyena; the metaphor was that the hyena, in devouring its prey, would "chew into it THROUGH THE

ANUS."⁸² The lawyer, for his part, admires the Cardinal's bravura in "choosing a lay brother as . . . private secretary."⁸³

These remarks are without inference of homophobic judgment. The Cardinal and the Lawyer are homosexuals of wealth and power. Homophobia has not deterred them from achieving their goals. They have learned to live successfully with their homosexuality and any manifestations of homophobia.

In Terrence McNally's And Things That Go Bump in the Night (1965), homosexuality is treated as insignificant, with an almost quotidian attitude. The homophobic and homophilic attitudes are mainly to be inferred from actions which are not taken by the characters, rather than by those actions which are undertaken. Homosexuality in this play is not a major moral concern; it is a weapon in a family's need to force their will on an outsider.

Ruby, her son Sigfrid, and her daughter Lakme are trying to discover what unknown forces are unleashed in their city after dark. A night-time curfew is imposed, and they are too afraid to go into the night to discover the nature of the threat. They have devised an elaborate scheme to have someone else brave the terrors of the dark for them. Sigfrid, with the aid of Lakme, goes out during the day to lure a bed partner to their home. The unsuspecting guest is photographed

and recorded during sexual intercourse with Sigfrid. These photographs and recordings are later used in an attempt to humiliate the visitor, forcing him out of the house after curfew. The visitor will thereby learn the nature of the threat of the unknown and return to tell the family about it.

Clarence, a homosexual, is the guest in the course of this play. Clarence is the most homophilic character in the play, but his homosexuality is not an overriding force to him. When mocked about it, he says, "That isn't everything about me. There's more."⁸⁴

Sigfrid is bisexual and does not state his sexual attitudes; Rudy, on the other hand, is ambivalent in her attitudes. At one point, referring to her son's liaison with Clarence, she says, "I don't approve, of course."⁸⁵ But at another point, when Sigfrid reminds her of social disapproval of homosexuality, she says, "Preposterous!"⁸⁶

While Sigfrid and Ruby are not homophobes, they are not pictured as homophiles. They are merely utilitarian: Clarence's homosexuality is the easiest weapon to use to drive him into the state of despair which will force him to leave their home after the curfew has sounded.

Clarence is driven to his death in one of the most protracted examples of ego-destruction based on homosexuality ever presented on the contemporary stage.

After having sex with Sigfrid, his clothes are hidden, and he is forced to wear a dress. After a lengthy dialogue during which the series of slides taken by Lakme are shown, and long minutes of the recordings of the conversations with Sigfrid are played, Clarence realizes that he has been used, and that his need for love is being reviled. This accomplished what Ruby and Sigfrid set out to do. Clarence goes rushing out into the dreaded night.

The morality of homosexuality does not concern the characters in this play. No one feels the necessity to pass judgment on another's sexual needs. In this case, the victim happens to be a homosexual, and his homosexuality is used as a weapon against him.

In England in 1964, 1965, and 1966, three plays were produced which were homophilic. Their impact was formidable when talk of these plays reached America. A study of the development of dramatic homophilia in the United States would be incomplete without mentioning them at this point.

Joe Orton brought homosexual attitudes into the realm of black comedy with Entertaining Mr. Sloane (1964).⁸⁷ The play treats of a complete reversal of moral standards. The homophobic Kemp is murdered by Sloane, a bisexual. Kemp's children, Ed and Kath, help Sloane dispose of the body, and they agree to share him as their lover.

This play shows a significant change in homophobic influence when compared with The Immoralist, produced just ten years earlier. In the Goetzes' play Michel is very nearly destroyed by paternal homophobia. In Orton's play Kemp's rejection of his son is totally ignored. Ed is unconcerned about his father's attitude, and he leaves home to become a success in business. By 1964 Homophobia accomplishes nothing. The ego destruction attempted by the father is ineffective, nor does the son suffer financially or legally.

Frank Marcus' The Killing of Sister George and Charles Dyer's Staircase present something unusual in dramatic fare: the homosexual milieu. In these plays homosexual women and men are presented as no different from other human beings; they have all the good and bad qualities of any person. They live their lives within the gay world, a milieu created by homosexuals as protection against an oppressive society.

The lesbian milieu was presented first in The Killing of Sister George (1965).⁸⁸ There is little evidence of homophobia in this play. Weinberg's discussion of the heterosexual attitude toward lesbianism offers a probable reason for the lack of homophobia. He states that lesbians are more easily accepted than male homosexuals because of male chauvinism. Many people regard lesbianism as the choice of an inferior for an inferior. Therefore, female homosexuals have less antipathy, fewer

phobias, to deal with than male homosexuals.⁸⁹ But lesbianism is rather rare in dramatic literature. This is the only major play dealing with the topic which was written and produced in America in the past twenty years.

Staircase (1966)⁹⁰ was the first major presentation of a play with only homosexual characters in it. It is, in final analysis, homophilic, though it contains many elements of homophobic attitudes. The characters, Harry and Charles, prepare to face a court case in which Charles has been accused of improper conduct. They fear the legal-physical and ego-destructive social oppressions. In their nervous agitation they torture, tease, and berate one another, but by the end of the play they are reconciled. Indications are that they will face the uncertainty of the pending trial together.

These three plays mark the beginning of a new presentation of homosexual characters in the drama. The homosexuals in the following plays do not acquiesce to the degradation imposed by a society or commit suicide. Dignity and pride in self are the hallmarks of homosexual behavior in the dramas to follow.

James Goldman's The Lion in Winter (1966) is another heterosexual play in which homosexuality is accepted. The major characters, Henry II of England, and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, are not concerned with the morality of homosexuality.

Henry acknowledges a trace of homosexuality in his own past: "In my time I've known countesses, milkmaids, courtesans and novices, whores, gypsies, jades and little boys."⁹¹ He is flip at the suggestion of Richard sleeping with boys, "Richard finds his way into so many legends."⁹²

Eleanor's attitude toward homosexuality is, like Ruby's in And Things That Go Bump in the Night, utilitarian. She sends Richard off to deal with Philip. As he goes, her last words are, "Promise anything."⁹³ The implication is not lost on Richard.

Richard the Lionhearted and Philip Capet, King of France, have had a homosexual love affair. Richard, like Clarence and David Regin, is unconcerned with his homosexuality. It is a part of him, but he has more pressing matters of state on his mind. Philip, however, is ambivalent about his true homosexual attitude. In one scene he implies an affection for Richard:

RICHARD: I never wrote because I thought you'd never answer. You got married.

PHILIP: Does that make a difference?

RICHARD: Doesn't it?

PHILIP: I've spent two years on every street in hell.

RICHARD: That's odd. I didn't see you there. (PHILIP takes RICHARD's hand. They start moving to the bed) You haven't said you love me.⁹⁴

But shortly afterwards Philip gainsays his love for the English prince:

PHILIP: (To HENRY) you know why I told him [I loved him]? So one day I could tell you all about it. You cannot imagine what that yes cost. Or perhaps you can. Imagine snuggling to a chancred whore and, bending back your lips in something like a smile, saying, "Yes I love you and I find you beautiful." I don't know how I did it.

RICHARD: No! It wasn't like that.

PHILIP: But it was.

RICHARD: You loved me.

PHILIP: Never.⁹⁵

Whether or not Philip did, indeed, love Richard is unimportant. What is important is that he also has a utilitarian attitude toward homosexuality. It is a weapon with which he can perhaps inflict some hurt upon Henry. Homosexuality in this play is used politically, or it is ignored, but it is not a cause for any phobia.

John Herbert's Fortune and Men's Eyes (1967) deals with three homosexuals and a fourth young man who engages in homosexuality because of the pressures of prison life. There is some homophobia in the play. The men sometimes exchange homophobic epithets, but they are ineffective at ego-destruction since they pass between peers. At first the heterosexual, Smitty, is very cautious in expressing his attitude; "I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, but I'm not . . . queer."⁹⁶ But he does acquiesce to a homosexual liaison, in order to avoid rape.

The more insidious and profound homophobia in this play deals with the extent to which society can

push its legal-physical and ego-destructive manifestations of homophobia. Mona, because of his size and manner, is unjustly convicted of attempted sodomy and sentenced to six months in jail. In prison he is sexually abused and taunted by the prisoners and guards. The only way he can maintain his sanity is to separate his mind and his body during times of stress. He manages to dissociate the physical and emotional entities which make up his ego. "I separate things in order to live with others and myself. What my body does and feels is one thing, and what I think and feel apart from that is something else."⁹⁷

This play effectively deals with the personal ramifications of homophobic social oppressions on the individual. In this treatment of the injustices which Mona suffers, the play becomes a plea for homophilic understanding.

Chronologically the next two plays to be discussed would be Mart Crowley's The Boys in the Band and David Gaard's And Puppy Dog Tails. They are the two most popular plays by American authors which deal with the homosexual milieu rather than with the homosexual in a heterosexual setting. Too, they pose special problems to the homophile: One is strong drama which imparts homophobic attitudes; the other is weak drama which espouses homophilia. Since they pose elements of special interest to this study, they will be dealt with at length in the next chapter.

The last play in this chapter, Small Craft Warnings (1972), indicates the present level of homophilic attitudes in the drama. It also shows Tennessee Williams' strongest homophilic statement. Williams' works, like the plays of no other author, embrace the scope and subject of this study. His writings reflect significant changes in attitudes toward homosexuality. From Camino Real through Cat On A Hot Tin Roof and Suddenly Last Summer, we can trace strong homophobic attitudes with only traces of homophilia. In this 1972 drama, however, homophobia is not the dominant attitude; it has been supplanted by homophilia.

The play is basically a series of monologues in which various characters state their feelings about certain human conditions. Some of these speeches concern homosexuality. None of the heterosexuals in the play are homophobic, but they are cautious homophiles. They have some reservations about homosexuality, but they avoid making moral judgments.

Bill, a heterosexual hustler, shows an existentialistic attitude toward homosexuality. He plans to proposition Quentin, the homosexual. When they get alone Bill will extort him for money. In Bill's mind this plan develops as though it were the natural order of things. It is not conceived from moral superiority or with any vestiges of homophobia: "I don't think I'll have t'do more than scare him a little. I don't

like beating 'em up. They can't help the way they are. Who can? Not me."⁹⁸

The bartender, Monk, would just as soon not have homosexuals around. The basis for his attitude is strictly commercial: "I've got no moral objections to them as a part of humanity, but I don't encourage them here."⁹⁹ They are bad for business.

Leona, a self-described "faggot's moll,"¹⁰⁰ is very much a homophile. She does speak some harsh words about homosexuality, but they are not the words of a homophobe enumerating the litany of homosexual evils. They are the words of a homophile who is cognizant of the effects of homophobia and social oppressions on the life of a homosexual. Because her dead brother was gay, she has a great deal of compassion for homosexuals, but she does not regret that her brother died young in his gay life:

I know the gay scene. I learned it from my kid brother. He came out early, younger than this boy here. I know the gay scene and I know the language of it and I know how full it is of sickness and sadness; it's so full of sadness and sickness, I could almost be glad that my little brother died before he had time to be infected with all that sadness and sickness in the heart of a gay boy.¹⁰¹

The most important homosexual element in this play is the characterization of Quentin. Quentin is different from most other homosexuals in Mr. Williams' plays. He does not commit suicide, he is not murdered, he is

not mad. He has more self-respect than any of Williams' other homosexual characters.

Quentin's most significant function is to provide Williams with a mouthpiece who can speak of homosexuality as, one would surmise, the author, himself, would speak of it:

There's a coarseness, a deadening coarseness, in the experience of most homosexuals. The experiences are quick, and hard, and brutal, and the pattern of them is practically unchanging. Their act of love is like the jabbing of a hypodermic needle to which they're addicted but which is more and more empty of real interest and surprise. This lack of variation and surprise in their . . . "love life" . . . spreads into other areas of . . . "sensibility?"¹⁰²

Williams' latest statement on the homosexual seems to be that he is a man who has lived many years, asked all the questions, gotten no answers. He is a man who has lost the ability to be surprised, and who says, "Oh, well" and rides off into the night. This is a far cry from the attitude expressed twenty years earlier when Baron de Charlus was trundled off, dead, in a wheelbarrow.

Williams' final indication of changing sociosexual attitudes is his presentation of the bisexual. Bobby, a young vagabond, is bisexual. The attitudes of the young are contrasted with the attitudes of the older when it becomes obvious that the new morality has codes of its own. Bobby neither submits to Quentin's attitudes nor does he respond to Leona's advances. Rather

than tie himself down to either the heterosexual or the homosexual, Bobby bicycles away in search of new adventure.

With the exception of The Boys in the Band and And Puppy Dog Tails, these are the most prominent plays which have touched on homosexuality over the past twenty years. In dramatic terms they define and elucidate the prejudices which lead to homophobia and the resulting social oppressions of homosexuality. They also indicate the position in which the homosexual finds himself as a result of this phobia.

Six of the plays are concerned with the state of resignation and despair as evinced by the homosexual (The Immoralist, Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, The Zoo Story, And Things That Go Bump in the Night, Staircase, and Fortune and Men's Eyes). Eight plays link death with homosexuality: one suicide (The Zoo Story); three murders (Compulsion, Camino Real, Entertaining Mr. Sloane); one death by cannibalism (Suddenly Last Summer); and one from natural causes, pernicious anemia (Small Craft Warnings).

Whereas the first five plays studied (Camino Real, Tea and Sympathy, The Immoralist, Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, and A View From the Bridge) are substantively homophobic in attitude, the last five discussed (The Killing of Sister George, Staircase, The Lion in Winter, Fortune and Men's Eyes, and Small Craft Warnings) reflect

predominately homophilic attitudes. They also contain new elements: a utilitarian attitude which implies a moralistic neutrality and bisexuality.

The trend toward the dramatic presentation of a "valid" homosexual identification on the American stage has been firmly established. The homosexuals of the 1960s are all infused with pride and dignity. Clearly homophilia has progressed from subordination to dominance over a period of less than twenty years.

In large measure the homophobic attitudes of the 1950s in dramas about heterosexuals have been replaced in the 1960s by homophilic attitudes. However, homophobic attitudes have not completely been done away with, as will be seen in the following discussion of The Boys in the Band.

Notes

¹ At this point there are no responses to Weinberg's book. He charges psychologists and psychiatrists, as a rule, with promoting homophobia for monetary gain. Surely there will be a response to his work in the near future. Humphrey's book makes no such drastic charge against sociologists. Out of the Closets, too, has not yet been reviewed in major sociological journals.

² Gen. 19:5. ³ Lev. 18:23. ⁴ Rom. 1:27.

⁵ Weinberg, Ibid., pp. 8-18.

⁶ Humphreys, Ibid., p. 9.

⁷ Tennessee Williams, Camino Real (Norfolk, Conn: New Directions, 1953), pp. 34-35.

⁸ Ibid., p. 38. ⁹ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹⁰ This is the first of four plays by Williams to be included in this study. His presentation of attitudes toward homosexuality vacillates in the 1950s. The homophobia in Camino Real is slightly modified by some homophilia in Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, but it is strongly reaffirmed in Suddenly Last Summer. By 1972, in line with the change in society's sexual mores, Williams presents a homophilic play which has only traces of homophobia.

¹¹ Robert Anderson, Tea and Sympathy (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 58.

¹² Ibid., p. 72.

¹³ Ibid. ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 163. ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 42-45.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

²¹ Ibid., p. 144.

²² Ibid., pp. 176-77.

²³ Ibid., p. 38.

- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 58.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 72.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 62.
- ²⁸ Ibid., pp. 62-63.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p. 41.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 179.
- ³¹ Ruth and Augustus Goetz, The Immoralist (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1954), p. 8.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid., p. 73
- ³⁴ The religious motive is used briefly in Tea and Sympathy, but Anderson obviously did not wish to pursue this line. It is presented almost as comic relief.
- ³⁵ Goetz, Ibid., p. 73.
- ³⁶ Ibid., pp. 90-91.
- ³⁷ Ibid., p. 31.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p. 33.
- ³⁹ Ibid., p. 78.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 121.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., p. 19.
- ⁴² Ibid., p. 117.
- ⁴³ Ibid., p. 74.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 34.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 39.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 61.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 73.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 32.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 32-33.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., p. 92.
- ⁵² Ibid., p. 93.
- ⁵³ John Simon, No Coward Soul Is His, New York, Oct. 10, 1972, p. 110.
- ⁵⁴ Goetz, Ibid., p. 121.
- ⁵⁵ Eric Bentley, The Dramatic Event (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), pp. 206-7.
- ⁵⁶ Tennessee Williams, Cat On A Hot Tin Roof (New York: Signet, 1955), p. 92.
- ⁵⁷ Weinberg, p. 14.
- ⁵⁸ Williams, Cat, p. 89.
- ⁵⁹ Arthur Miller, A View From the Bridge (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 108.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 118. ⁶¹ Ibid., p. 139.

⁶² Meyer Levin, Compulsion (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), p. 17. Mr. Levin has discredited the Broadway production of his play: "Every sensational aspect had been emphasized. In one scene Judd made an outright declaration of homosexual love on the stage" (xxxvii). The quoted material is from the play which Mr. Levin rewrote after the Broadway production.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 63. ⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 97. ⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 99.

⁶⁸ It is also interesting to note that A Taste of Honey, Staircase, and The Killing of Sister George all came from England. These plays all evince homophilia and/or the homosexual milieu long before any American plays do so. This might be interpreted as indicative of the rise of homophilia in England prior to its emergence in the United States. Homosexual acts between consenting adults was legalized in England before in any of the United States.

⁶⁹ Shelagh Delaney, A Taste of Honey, in Seven Plays of the Modern Theatre (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1962), p. 207.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 216. ⁷¹ Ibid., p. 221.

⁷² Tennessee Williams, Suddenly Last Summer (New York: New Directions, 1958), p. 27.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 80. ⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 62.

⁷⁶ First produced in Germany in 1959.

⁷⁷ Edward Albee, The Zoo Story, in Two Plays by Edward Albee (New York: Signet, 1961), p. 25.

⁷⁸ Lorraine Hansberry, The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window (New York: Signet, 1966), p. 247.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 246.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 309. It must be noted, though, that this is said in a moment of self-derision as well as with reference to all others in the room with her.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 273.

⁸² Edward Albee, Tiny Alice (New York: Atheneum, 1965), p. 12.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁸⁴ Terrence McNally, And Things That Go Bump in the Night, in Playwrights for Tomorrow, Vol. 1, ed. by Arthur H. Ballet (St. Paul, Minn.: University of Minnesota, 1966), p. 241.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 181.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 202.

⁸⁷ Joe Orton, Entertaining Mr. Sloane (New York: Grove Press, 1964).

⁸⁸ Frank Marcus, The Killing of Sister George (New York: Random House, 1965).

⁸⁹ Weinberg, p. 15.

⁹⁰ Charles Dyer, Staircase (New York: Grove Press, 1966).

⁹¹ James Goldman, The Lion in Winter (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 4.

⁹² Ibid., p. 67.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 57.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

⁹⁶ John Herbert, Fortune and Men's Eyes (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 22.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

⁹⁸ Tennessee Williams, Small Craft Warnings (New York: New Directions, 1972), p. 28.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 46

CHAPTER TWO

HOMOPHOBIC AND HOMOPHILIC ATTITUDES IN THE BOYS IN THE BAND AND AND PUPPY DOG TAILS

In the late 1960s a concerted effort on the part of homosexual spokesmen was undertaken to dispel homophobic myths and to invalidate homophobic motives. Under these circumstances anything pertaining to homosexuality became important to the leaders of the gay liberation movement, so close scrutiny has been afforded each drama touching on homosexuality which has subsequently been produced. Mart Crowley's The Boys in the Band and David Gaard's And Puppy Dog Tails have stimulated more response from homosexual leaders than any other plays of the period.

Even though The Boys in the Band and And Puppy Dog Tails are both set in the homosexual milieu, they are very different in their presentation of attitudes toward homosexuality. The Boys in the Band is homophobic, and And Puppy Dog Tails is homophilic. As dramas the effect they had on the development of homophilia and the subsequent attempt at establishing a valid homosexual identity was wide-ranging. Gay spokesmen have tended to gainsay The Boys in the Band and to support And Puppy Dog Tails.

The Boys in the Band has come to represent most of what homophiles consider deplorable in dramatic presentation of homosexuals and homosexuality. It deals mainly with negative aspects of homosexuality. It implies support of the major homophobic motives, and it reinforces several myths about homosexuals through stereotype characterization. Each of the principal characters is struggling with his homosexuality, and they evince no gay pride. The one or perhaps two characters who are not homophobic are not given full characterization; therefore, their homophilic statement is weakened.

And Puppy Dog Tails attempts to counter this negative attitude. It was presented a year after The Boys in the Band, partially in direct refutation to Boys' homophobic content. It was conceived and designed as an argument against the long dramatic history of homophobic attitudes. The play affirms gay pride and it "confirm[s] to gays and straights alike . . . that homosexual lovers need answer to no one but themselves."¹

Unfortunately, from the homophile's point of view, the more negative play had the most effect on the public and the homosexual subculture. The Boys in the Band received favorable heterosexual critical response. It had a long New York run; it has been produced in all parts of the country by major colleges, repertory and stock companies; and it has been transposed, virtually word for word, into a motion picture. And Puppy Dog

Tails, however, has received limited production. Its initial New York run was short; it was produced in San Francisco and Chicago; and a revival is planned for New York. It has not even been published as of this date.

The writers' dramaturgy accounts, in great part, for the wide divergence in effect on the public and the gay liberation movement. Both plays are first efforts, but Crowley's work is superior to Gaard's. Crowley had had some experience in writing screenplays. His principal characters are fully developed. They are presented in a variety of situations and their reactions complete their personalities. His dialogue is good and well within the demands of decorum. Gaard, on the other hand, had no previous playwriting experience. His first play has few elements of dramaturgical strength. His characters are thinly drawn. His dialogue is poor and cliché ridden. He manipulates his situations and depends on sophomoric sound effects to add emotional impact to key moments. He is, however, very candid about his shortcomings: "I just did not know my craft well enough."²

The bases of both plays are similar: reactions of homosexuals when their milieu is invaded by a hostile entity. The plays' individual observations are completely different. In Crowley's play the ultimate observation is that homosexuals react with guilt and shame,

indicating a negative self-regard. In Gaard's play they react, in part, with a defensive attitude, indicating some negative self-regard. But in the final analysis they display a good deal of pride in themselves and their way of life. They do not defer to the heterosexual.

The Boys in the Band derives its suspense from character delineation rather than action. How the characters' psychologies are exposed over the course of the play is more interesting than the situations in which they find themselves. The play might be described as a psychological case study of eight homosexuals responding to the presence of one heterosexual.

Michael is hosting a birthday party for Harold. He has invited several friends to come to the party. Each of these men seems to represent a facet of the prevalent homosexual myths. Donald has "dropped out" of life. Emory is the chiché effeminate male. Hank represents the school-teacher stability. His lover Larry is the promiscuous male. Bernard is a Black who "knows his place" as a Black and as a homosexual. Cowboy is a prostitute. Michael is ridden with guilt and self-hatred. Harold is a study in self-control and self-discipline, but he is also tinged with a nihilistic attitude.

The play's complication stems from the unexpected arrival of Michael's former college roommate, Alan.

Alan is a heterosexual, and he doesn't know Michael is gay. He quickly sizes up the situation and tries to leave, but Emory taunts him. Alan beats Emory to the floor. The strain of the situation is too much for Michael. He begins to drink heavily, and hostility begins to develop in him. He devises a party game which he calls "Affairs of the Heart." Each participant is to telephone the one person he has truly loved and confess that love over the phone. It is a degrading game, designed specifically to expose what Michael thinks is Alan's latent homosexuality. Several calls are made by the gays, and through this device we learn much of the character's attitudes about himself. However, the game fails to expose homosexuality in Alan; he telephones his wife. With Michael's hostility exposed, the other guests leave, and Michael collapses in remorse.

And Puppy Dog Tails dramatizes incidents involving John; his lover, Carey-Lee; his gay friend, Tommy; and his straight friend, Bud. The friendship between John and Bud deteriorates as Bud slowly realizes the fact of John's homosexuality. Bud has decided to come to New York after a hitch in the Navy. He does not know that John is gay, and John does not particularly want him to find out.

John and Bud were friends in high school, and they participated in adolescent homosexual experiences. They repeat their sexual encounters one time in their New

York reunion. Bud, however, refuses to accept the fact that John is a homosexual. He and Tommy and Carey-Lee argue his homophobic reactions and attitudes. John and Bud, in turn, have a serious discussion about homosexuality without being deferent. Bud leaves John and Carey-Lee to continue their affair.

The Boys in the Band is a play which educated as well as entertained. Crowley made it possible for the heterosexuals in his audience to enter an alien subculture and leave it unscathed some two hours later. He utilized masterful dialogue which created believable persons; arresting situations and impressions on stage; and pauses which not only gave the actors time to react, but also constituted a meaningful dialogue for the audience. However, it was also, according to some homosexual critics, rife with homophobic stereotypes and myths.

It is necessary to examine Crowley's play both in its own dramatic integrity and in its historical perspective relevant to homophilia on stage and the development of a valid homosexual identity. It becomes necessary to discover the elements which homophiles found denigrating to a positive development of the homosexual identity, which make it offensive and detrimental to the quest for that identity which has begun to emerge since 1969, the year of the Stonewall Riots.³

The Boys in the Band does contain some homophilic elements, but to a greater degree the play deals with homophobic elements. Two minor characters, Hank and Larry, are strong homophilic characters. The other characters show varying degrees of homophobia, through their self-regard or their behavior.

Hank and Larry provide the most valid homosexual identities in the play. They portray self-respect, dignity, and pride. And they offer a rare insight into that homosexual relationship which is sometimes termed a "marriage."

In a heterosexual marriage two people give up some individual liberties to share a life, and that life is sanctioned and sealed by law. A homosexual marriage is also a willing relinquishment of some personal liberties, but it is neither sanctioned nor sealed.

Hank and Larry are the embodiment of intimate jealousies and desires for freedom and the necessities to be loved. All of these complex emotions are very real in any person. They are especially complicated in the homosexual because he has so many other emotional strains resulting from homophobic pressures.

Hank is an athletic math teacher who is in the process of divorcing his wife. He implies masculinity, stability, and elements of heterosexuality. He is the antithesis of the effeminate Emory. He wears ivy league clothes and plays basketball and tennis. He

avoids even the slightest identification with Emory. At one point when Donald cracks a joke, "Emory roars, slaps Hank on the knee; Hank gets up, moves away."⁴ And Hank is quick to respond negatively to Emory's effeminate behavior. When Michael goes to the door to get the birthday cake from the delivery boy:

EMORY: (Loudly) Ask him if he's got any hot-cross buns!

HANK: Come on, Emory, knock it off. . . .

EMORY: You remind me of an old-maid school teacher.

HANK: You remind me of a chicken wing.

EMORY: I'm sure you meant that as a compliment.⁵

This is a classic encounter between the homosexuals who are caught up in role playing: the very conservative, masculine type, and the effeminate type. Homophiles view both as products of the hostile homophobic environment.

Larry is probably the homosexual who best displays characteristics of which most homophiles and gay liberationists would approve. He makes no apology for his homosexuality and at no point indicates that it is something which needs to be defended. He has a strong sex drive. Hank's jealousy and the restrictions put on him by "marriage" restrict him somewhat, but he refuses to lie to Hank. He insists on dignity for himself and for Hank in their affair:

HANK: What kind of an understanding do you want!

LARRY: Respect--for each other's freedom. With no need to lie or pretend.⁶

The lovers leave the play on a tenuous note, yet their future is the most optimistic of any of the homosexuals present:

LARRY: . . . For what it's worth, I love you.

HANK: I'll . . . I'll try.

LARRY: I will too.⁷

The Boys in the Band is about homosexuality, but these two men constitute the strongest homophilic statement. It is hardly sufficient to counter the play's inherent homophobia.

In spite of effeminate mannerisms, Emory is also a character who evinces homophilia. At no point does he excuse or explain his homosexuality. In fact he displays two positive characteristics, courage and compassion. Although effeminate, Emory is no coward when faced with homophobia. His visceral reaction to the presence of Alan's implied negative attitude indicates a presence of gay pride. Even in his relationship with Alan, who had just assaulted him, Emory displays compassion. When Michael is attacking Alan's heterosexuality, inferring that he is a "closet" homosexual, Emory tries to stop him: "Don't Michael. It won't help anything."⁸ However, Emory's total characterization is more of an argument of support for certain homophobic stereotype behavior rather than a strong homophilic statement.

Other characters in the play generally depict negative homosexual attitudes, principally in the form of perpetuating some of the homophobic myths which have developed over the years. Most of the homosexuals in this play are variously depicted as mentally ill, effeminate, promiscuous, masochistic, unstable. Crowley also touches on some myths regarding homosexuality itself. He helps to weaken the myth about who can be a homosexual, but he perpetuates the "mother-fixation" myth, and myths of stereotypical behavior.

One of the functions of Alan in this play is to provide the catalyst for various responses of homosexuals to heterosexual thought. Alan identifies strongly with Hank, who is conservatively dressed, and who is the father of two young boys. At one point Alan asks Hank to leave with him. Although he knows that he has stumbled into a homosexual party, he cannot accept homosexuality in a man such as Hank, a man with whom he can identify. Since he does identify with Hank, all Alan can manage to do is protest, "But . . . but . . . you're married,"⁹ when he learns that Hank and Larry are lovers. In this way Crowley shatters the myth that married men cannot engage in homosexuality.

One myth which Crowley perpetuates deals with the ongoing search for causative reasons for homosexuality. Crowley gives Michael and Donald causative speeches which are laden with clichés and cop-outs. In the

following excerpts Crowley writes that their homosexuality is primarily caused by parental influences. Their mothers loved them too much, their fathers were either uncaring or ignorant or both. No sense of responsibility was taught; maturity was inhibited. These speeches do little more than restate time-worn clichés:

DONALD: . . . I've realized it was always when I failed that Evelyn loved me the most--because it displeases Walt, who wanted perfection. And when I fell short of the mark she was only too happy to make up for it with her love. So I began to identify failing with winning my mother's love. And I began to fail on purpose to get it . . . Failure is the only thing with which I feel at home. Because it is what I was taught at home.¹⁰

MICHAEL: Because my Evelyn refused to let me grow up. She was determined to keep me a child forever and she did one helluva job at it. And my Walt stood by and let her do it. (A beat) What you see before you is a thirty-year-old infant. And it was all done in the name of love--what she labeled love . . . when what she was really doing was feeding her own need--satisfying her own loneliness. (A beat) She made me into a girl-friend dash lover . . . she'd take me to the beauty parlor with her and we'd both get our hair bleached and a permanent and a manicure. (A beat) And Walt let this happen. (A beat) . . . I was frail and pale, and to hear her tell it, practically female. I can't tell you the thousands of times she said to me, "I declare, Michael, you should have been a girl." . . . She didn't want me to prepare for life or how to be out in the world on my own . . . But I left anyway . . . and here I am--unequipped, undisciplined, untrained, unprepared and unable to live!¹¹

After this outpouring Michael broadens the causative myth by including himself before he finally excuses his parents for their behavior:

And don't get me wrong. I know it's easy to cop out and blame Evelyn and Walt and say it was their fault. That we were simply the helpless put-upon victims. But in the end, we are responsible for ourselves. And I guess--I'm not sure--but I want to believe it--that in their own pathetic, dangerous way, they just loved us too much.¹²

These speeches give offense to homophiles in two ways. They enhance the parent-causative homosexual myth, and they imply guilt through the attempt to assign a blame for homosexuality.

Emory is a portrayal of the myth that all homosexuals are effeminate and loud. All of his actions seem deliberately chosen to emphasize his homosexuality. For example, his entrance emphasizes his "swishy" nature and his need to channel attention away from his inherent vulnerability:

(Bursting in) ALL RIGHT THIS IS A RAID! EVERYBODY'S UNDER ARREST! (This entrance is followed by a loud, raucous laugh as EMORY throws his arms around MICHAEL and gives him a big kiss on the cheek. Referring to the dish he carries) Hello, darlin'! Connie Casserole. Oh, Mary, Don't ask.¹³

This entrance establishes Emory as a burlesque of a man.

However, Emory is not a shallow person. He does have a depth of character. When Crowley puts him in certain situations, he responds with honesty and tenderness, both of which belie his raucous entrance. During the game in the second act, he relates the circumstances of his first love--a teen-age crush he had on a dentist:

Well, anyway, I was a wreck. I mean a total mess. I couldn't eat, sleep, stand up, sit down, nothing. I could hardly cut out silver stars or finish the clouds for the prom. So I called him on the telephone and asked if I could see him alone . . . He said okay and told me to come by his house. I was so nervous my hands were shaking and my voice was unsteady. I couldn't look at him--I just stared straight in space and blurted out why I'd come. I told him . . . I wanted him to be my friend. I said that I had never had a friend who I could talk to and tell everything and trust. I asked him if he would be my friend.¹⁴

Emory's outrageous behavior is a shield which protects sensitivity. He is not all soft, however. He does attack Alan when the "straight" impinges upon the gay territory. But in the final analysis, Emory's characterization is such that he displays offensive characteristics to heterosexuals; Alan describes him as being like "a butterfly in heat!"¹⁵

Donald's characterization reenforces the myth that all homosexuals are mentally ill. Donald is a study of the homosexual's penchant for self-castigation when he has succumbed to society's ego-destructive oppression. Donald does not feel as though he is equipped to participate in situations where he might be expected to succeed. He cannot do successful things because he believes, "I was raised to be a failure. I was groomed for it."¹⁶ Since he believes this, he puts himself on the fringe of life so that he will not have to participate. Participation would be like asking to lose. He exiles himself from his friends and maintains himself through menial work. He is not a very happy person. Very

little about him establishes a valid homosexual identity.

The other minor characters in the play evince a basic humanity, but otherwise their negative characteristics tend to reenforce homophobic attitudes.

Cowboy is a homosexual prostitute who is hopelessly unintelligent and seemingly lost. He is insulted and ordered about, but his last speech, coming from a well of naïveté, discloses a yearning for understanding and self-respect: "Well . . . I'm not like the average hustler you'd meet. I try to show a little affection--it keeps me from feeling like such a whore."¹⁷

In Bernard, a Negro, we see a struggle to gain dignity in a world which is reluctant to give it. His struggle is on two fronts, his sexuality and his race. He has a great deal of compassion for his fellows at the party, especially Emory. He knows but too well how difficult it is to hold up your head in the face of ego-destructive adversity. He tries to dissuade Emory from belittling himself by making the phone call. In doing this he urges self-respect and he acknowledges the reality of ego-destructive forces:

BERNARD: Don't Emory . . . Don't. Please! . . . Don't! You'll be sorry. Take my word for it.

EMORY: What have I got to lose?

BERNARD: Your dignity. That's what yo've got to lose.

MICHAEL: Well, that's a knee-slapper! I love your telling him about dignity when you allow him to degrade you constantly by Uncle Tom-ing you to death.

BERNARD: He can do it, Michael. I can do it . . . I don't like it from him and I don't like it from me--but I do it myself and I let him do it. I let him do it because it's the only thing that, to him, makes him my equal. We both got the short end of the stick--but I got a hell of a lot more than he did and he knows it. I let him Uncle Tom me just so he can tell himself he's not a complete loser . . . It's his defense.¹⁸

Michael is the most completely developed character in the play. He is the most central to the plot, and we get to observe him the most. We learn things about him through his reactions and interactions.

When he has control of himself, Michael is a very good person, and constitutes a statement of valid identity. For the bulk of the play, however, he is a very negative identity, embodying several homophobic motives. He is a telling example of the hostility and negative identity generated by years of conditioning from ego-destructive elements in society.

Implicitly or explicitly Michael acknowledges the validity of each of the basic motives for homophobia. These motives are manifested at different times during the play as Michael's character development reveals self-hate and guilt. Michael does not want to be a homosexual, and he suffers from guilt because he is. Principally his guilt stems from his religious and value-training backgrounds.

Michael, to a degree, is a practicing Catholic: "I only go to confession when I get on a plane."¹⁹ His practice of that faith implies that he accepts its strictures against unrestrained sexual activity. Michael is in serious trouble on this point, because the Roman Catholic Church is especially adamant in its view towards "sins" of sexuality:

The sixth commandment forbids all impurity and immodesty in words, looks and actions, whether alone or with others.

Impurity is any deliberate thought, word, look or deed with oneself or another by which the sexual appetite is aroused outside of marriage, and even in marriage when contrary to the purpose for which God instituted the married state. Some of the chief sins against purity are: . . . deliberate actions with oneself or others performed to arouse the sexual appetite.²⁰

Given these strictures, Michael would be plagued with a conscience which niggled him about being a homosexual and made him feel a traitor to his own kind.

Some of the other characters try to point out Michael's irrationalities regarding religion, but the arguments are weak and ineffective. Michael believes he is in "sin" because of his homosexuality, and he is left in a condition of guilt because no one effectively challenges his views.

Michael displays an unstable value system in two ways: his reliance upon the fantasy world of motion pictures, novels, and plays, and the wasteful manner in which he spends money.

His fantasy world is a world of camp, and camp is a major by-product of the homosexual way of life. In order to understand the import of camp to homosexuality, it is necessary to arrive at some understanding of its basic nature and genesis:

Camp is something in vogue, at least as far as someone is concerned, but is not taken seriously. In short, camp is an unserious lien between people. It may be beautiful or ugly--or a mixture of both. It may be bizarre and complex--or plain and simple. It may be extravagant and elegant--or inexpensive and ordinary. Camp creates instantaneous recognition in the mind of the beholder, and often amuses him. The desire to share this peculiar reaction with friends, no matter how obscure the object might be, is the birth of camp.²¹

. . . camp . . . is basically the homosexual sensibility translated into a performing art²² (or nonperforming art, or general behavior).

Much of the homosexual's argot is made up of camp words and phrases. Crowley's play abounds with examples of this jargon, and nothing could be of a more "unserious lien" than the movies to which Michael refers.

Michael mentions films no less than nine times in the first act. He started living in the world of movies as a boy, selecting the movies over theatre because ". . . there wasn't any Shubert Theatre in Hot Coffee, Mississippi!"²³ Their influence carried over into his adult life. His dependence on them as a source for casual conversation or retorts shows that they constitute a veritable escape from his real world.

Spending money is an escape for Michael which is far more serious than movies. It represents an actual, physical inability to cope with value systems. He buys on credit and lives beyond his means. He wears three expensive sweaters during the course of the play; the two discarded ones are carelessly flung onto the floor. This gesture is obviously aimed at projecting a facade of casual disregard for material cost.

Michael's compulsive spending is an attempt to elude the boredom and sense of waste which precedes his lapses into guilt, but the attempt is futile. Spending tends to heighten his sense of guilt by making him aware of his effete existence. This is strongly stated in a speech to Donald:

You think it's just nifty how I've always flitted from Beverly Hills to Rome to Acapulco to Amsterdam, picking up a lot of one-night stands and a lot of custom-made duds along the trail . . . my hysterical escapes from country to country, party to party, bar to bar, bed to bed, hangover to hangover, and all of it, hand to mouth! (A beat) Run, charge, run, buy, borrow, make, spend, run, squander, beg, run, run, run, waste, waste, waste!²⁴

Beyond his homophobic inclinations, Michael displays some negative personality characteristics which underscore the negative identity which he represents. He resorts to alcohol, and he displays sadistic tendencies as well as a deep sense of shame of his homosexuality.

When situations arose which Michael could not cope with, he would turn to alcohol. This means of escape from reality, unlike his compulsive spending, frightened him enough that he tried to control it. When we first meet Michael, he has stopped drinking. He says he did it to avoid another hangover, but he really stopped because of the effect it had on him.

DONALD: I could always tell when you were getting high--one way.

MICHAEL: I'd get hostile.²⁵

This hostility was very evident to Michael's closest friends. Later, when the party is at its dramatic peak, Harold explains Michael's behavior. It is obvious to Harold that Michael cannot cope with the various guilts he is suffering: "Guilt turns to hostility. Isn't that right, Michael?"²⁶

Like the circular destructive effect of his spending, Michael's alcoholic escape damaged as much as it protected.

At times Michael's hostility was manifested by his sadistic behavior. He devised a party game in which the stakes were personal dignity, and he bullied the weakest of his guests into playing. At various times during the evening he attacked people who were vulnerable because of personality or racial or ethnic characteristics. He hits at Emory's effeminacy:

Why would anybody want to go to bed with a flaming little sissy like you? . . . Who'd make a pass at you--I'll tell you who--nobody. Except maybe some fugitive from the Braille Institute;²⁷

He jibes at Bernard's race:

Y'all want to hear a little polite parlor jest from the liberal Deep South? Do you know why Nigras have such big lips? Because they're always going 'P-p-p-p-a-a-a-h!'²⁸

He denigrates Harold's ethnic background by singing a vaudeville bit:

No matter how you figger,
It's tough to be a nigger,
(Indicates Bernard)
But it's tougher
To be a Jeeew-ooooou-oo!²⁹

Michael lacks Gay Pride.³⁰ Soon after the play begins we learn that Michael is ashamed of his homosexuality. His shame, though, is very complex. At one point he speaks as though he no longer harbors it: "Believe it or not, there was a time in my life when I didn't go around announcing that I was a faggot,"³¹ the reverse implication is that he no longer takes pains to hide this fact. But this reverse implication is a contradiction to his actions when he thinks that his heterosexual friend is coming to the party.

He believes that Alan would not approve in any way of his true life-style and his friends: "I mean [Alan and his family] look down on people in the theatre--so whatta you think he'll feel about this freak show I've got booked for dinner?"³²

Michael is so concerned that Alan might discover his homosexuality that he lectures his guests on proper behavior, which generates hostility in others. Donald says, "Michael, don't insult me by giving me any lecture on acceptable social behavior. I promise to sit with my legs spread apart and keep my voice in a deep register."³³ Even Donald, who is very negative about his own homosexuality, is annoyed by Michael's lack of self-regard.

Michael's guilt, shame, hostility, and homophobia all combine to force his ultimate self-reproachment in one of the final scenes of the play. By this point the party is a shambles, Michael has insulted each of the guests, and, in turn, has been castigated by Harold. The other guests, as though they were aware of the immense struggles going on inside him tended to avoid or ignore him. The enormity of what he had done and his situation finally proves to be too much for him, and he sobs into Donald's arms, ". . . If we . . . if we could just . . . not hate ourselves too much. That's it, you know. If we could just learn not to hate ourselves quite so very much."³⁴

This speech is the epitome of a homosexual's homophobic reaction. It implies validity to all homophobic motives and suggests the futility of fighting homophobic oppression. It also implies the futility of attempting to establish a valid homosexual identity.

When Michael is not ridden with guilt and hostility and homophobia, he is very loyal, considerate, and generous. Unfortunately, in the eyes of serious homophiles, Michael's positive attributes, like Emory's, would be effectively camouflaged by his negative characteristics. They see him as a guilt-ridden, wanton hedonist who shuns responsibility and articulates homophobic attitudes. This is hardly the public image of a homosexual for which homophiles have been striving.

The second most completely drawn character in the play is Harold. He is an ambiguous statement of homophobic and homophilic attitudes. Harold is characterized as a person who is very much aware of all the ramifications of being a homosexual, but he does not represent a truly valid homosexual identity. Like Michael, he holds no false values about himself; he knows what he is, and he knows that marijuana is his escape:

What I am, Michael, is a thirty-two-year-old ugly, pock-marked Jew fairy--and if it takes me a while to pull myself together and if I smoke a little grass before I can get up the nerve to show this face to the world, it's nobody's goddamn business but my own. (Instant switch to chatty tone) And how are you this evening?35

In the face of adversity, Harold retreats to a position of safety by keeping himself on the fringe of the action and the dialogue. When threatened, he waits for the proper moment and then springs in attack, but only in self-defense, never in hostility. When Michael

strikes at some of Harold's weaknesses, Harold waits and scores some of Michael's own shortcomings, the ones which bother him the most:

MICHAEL: Yes, you've got scars on your face-- but they're not that bad and if you'd leave yourself alone you wouldn't have any more than you've already awarded yourself . . . And the pills! Harold has been gathering, saving, and storing up barbituates for the last year like a goddamn squirrel. All in preparation for and anticipation of the long winter of his death. But I tell you right now, Hallie. When the time comes, you'll never have the guts. It's not always like it happens in the plays, not all faggots bump themselves off at the end of the story.

HAROLD: What you say may be true. Time will undoubtedly tell. But, in the meantime, you've left out one detail--the cosmetics and astringents are paid for, the bathroom is paid for, and the pills are paid for!³⁶

Harold softens the thrust of Michael's hostility. Harold is the only person in the play who has enough strength of character and resolve to turn Michael's attacks back on himself. Harold is uncowed.

MICHAEL: I'm warning you!

HAROLD: (Cooly) Are you now? Are you warning me? Me? I'm Harold. I'm the one person you don't warn, Michael. Because you and I are a match. And we tread very softly with each other because we both play each other's game too well. Oh, I know this game you're playing. I know it very well. And I play it very well. You play it very well, too. But you know what, I'm the only one that's better at it than you are. I can beat you at it. So don't push me. I'm warning you.³⁷

Finally, Harold becomes a metaphor for Michael's conscience in a speech that might be considered homophilic because it blasts Michael's homophobias. After the party has collapsed and while the realization of the

enormity of his actions is growing in Michael, Harold puts a few truths to him:

(Calmly, coldly, clinically) Now it is my turn. And ready or not, Michael, here goes. (A beat) You are a sad and pathetic man. You're a homosexual and you don't want to be. But there is nothing you can do to change it. Not all your prayers to your God, not all the analysis you can buy in all the years you've got left to live. You may very well one day be able to know a heterosexual life if you want it desperately enough--if you pursue it with the fervor with which you annihilate--but you will always be homosexual as well. Always, Michael. Always. Until the day you die.³⁸

In this speech is the crux of the liberationists' disappointment in this play. Michael, the protagonist, is sad and pathetic. He does not want to be homosexual, and he despairs in the knowledge that he is. He has no gay pride. And gay pride is very much at issue in any discussion of The Boys in the Band with a gay liberationist or a homophile leader.

Harold might be considered the nuntius for any sort of homophilic message in the play, but it is a mixed blessing. He advocates, inferentially, gay pride, but he saves pills for suicide, and he depends heavily on marijuana to escape from his own realities. His words may imply homophilia, but his actions do not constitute the actions of a person who possesses a valid homosexual identity.

Obviously The Boys in the Band is a homophobic play. The general attitude dramatized is one of negative response to homosexuality. While there are one

or two homosexual characters who do not try to excuse or need to defend their way of life, not one of them actively proclaims that "gay is good."

At first The Boys in the Band evoked a positive response from homosexuals. David Roggensack, a member of the militant Gay Activists Alliance of New York, likened this response to a desperate acceptance because of a need that had to be filled: "The first reaction to [gay] people would be, 'Hey! That's about gay people. How wonderful!' Because they're so starved for it."³⁹

Indeed, the audience was given what might seem to be an exceptionally thorough view of the homosexual's life style: (1) filled with camp names, references to movies, plays, and novels; 2) dependent on alcohol and drugs; 3) the various aspects of the social elements of the promiscuity, lover relationships, and the depths of friendship; 4) the indiscriminate use of female pronouns and names; 5) the psychological plumbings which evoke self-awareness, self-doubt, self-abuse; 6) the desperate need for understanding and dignity; and, above all, 7) the desperate need for love, ranging from participants in a "marriage" to male prostitution.

If, in this thoroughness, it presented a valid picture of the homosexual, it would have continued to be welcomed with open arms by the gay community. But, as Roggensack continues; "Then you start to look deeply

into it and you realize that it doesn't resolve; it perpetuates myth about gay people."

The response of the gay community, after studying attitudes presented in the play, separated along the lines of those homosexuals who maintained a low public profile and activists. These responses fit quite nicely into the differences in public gay pride which these two schools of thought display.

Jim Kepner, President of ONE, Inc., stated, "I don't think that kind of situation is particularly likely, but it made a strong play, and the characters, I think, are real enough."⁴⁰

Speaking as a member privy to the viewpoint of the more conservative element of SPREE, Kepner said, "Most SPREE members found it an excellent play which presents the gay life as it is." But not all of Kepner's acquaintances agree with this. "And most Gay Liberation members, with some considerable exceptions, found it an abomination which presents gay life as it used to be, even though they would admit that possibly every character is true to life. But that representation does not . . . take into account the deep change in gay consciousness that's taken place. In all of us."

David Roggensack agrees with Kepner's view. "The Boys in the Band was an honest reflection of its time, and a very astute one, and a very well made play, but

now it's old fashioned . . . gay people acted much more stereotypical then than they do now."

On the more negative side, Merle Miller, a writer who made history with a self-descriptive gay article in the New York Times, described the play as "self-pitying."⁴¹ William Edward Glover of the Homosexual Information Center claims that it "gave a distorted view."⁴² When the movie, which was virtually a filming of the stage script, opened in New York, representatives from the New York Gay Liberation Front demonstrated "in protest to the movie's denigrating stereotypes."⁴³

It is in the presentation of the stereotypes of the 1960s' thinking that most homophiles find fault with The Boys in the Band. Specifically, as stated by Roggensack, the major argument with the play is that it freezes the thought of the day and does not allow for changes. There has been much change in attitude and self-regard since April, 1968, especially as found in the portrayal of the homosexual who is deep into self-pitying psychological plumbings as well as dealing with the homophobic myths of mental illness and loneliness.

The long discussion between Michael and Donald about why they became homosexuals represents a reality which disturbs many in the homophile movement. Teal notes that it is widely accepted in the movement that "every homosexual, whether he be a truck-driver or a

defense attorney, has at least one big theory, one theory he's forever building, modulating, extending, scrapping or revising: Why am I gay?"⁴⁴ This philosophical obsession causes much consternation among homophile leaders.

For one thing, it assumes that there is fault to be assigned, and, further, it assumes that a homosexual must discover why he is a homosexual. These assumptions are self-defeating in that they force someone to defend a part of their basic personality--their sexuality. This self-questioning is peculiar to homophobic homosexuals. As Weinberg points out, since no one is ever asked to defend heterosexuality, a gay person should not have to defend homosexuality.⁴⁵ This self-searching and self-doubt is further evidence of the pervasiveness of ego-destruction used by homophobes to combat that which they consider an insidious enemy. Self-doubt is also an implicit agreement with that phobia.

There seems to be an expectation on the part of certain critics that authors of homosexual material must defend or explain a character's source of homosexuality. These critics, in the words of Jim Kepner, feel it "irresponsible of the author and the producers as a whole to present homosexual characters with no attempt to show what had made them that way." Kepner continues, "I think in The Boys in the Band the author certainly does that. He bends over backwards." To a militant

homophile Crowley played right into the hands of these critics, and, inferentially, into the hands of homophobes.

The element of loneliness is often used as an argument against following a homosexual way of life.⁴⁶ In this play, with the exception of Hank and Larry, each of the homosexuals goes off alone to face his life. Michael several times implies that he would like for Donald to stay at his apartment. He wants the company.

The accepted concept is that homosexuality is a more lonely way of life than heterosexuality. This concept is sustained by Crowley. Weinberg, however, maintains that aloneness is experienced by all persons who are aware of life and its relationship to themselves. "What seems like a forfeit owed for the life [homosexuals] choose is instead a price paid by each of us simply because we live and are conscious."⁴⁷ Homophiles resent the implication that only heterosexuality can sustain a relationship between two people.

The myth that homosexuals are mentally ill is most deeply resented by homophile spokesmen. For example, on May 14, 1970, the national convention of the American Psychiatric Association was zapped⁴⁸ by homosexual men and women who were protesting the very concept, much less the practice, of aversion therapy to "cure" homosexuality.⁴⁹ Since that time other zaps have been held at psychiatric conferences to encourage

the association's acknowledgment "that homosexuality is not an illness and should not be classified as such,"⁵⁰ and to promote discussions of homosexuality "as an alternative life style."⁵¹

What compounds the fault of Crowley in The Boys in the Band is that there is not one single instance of any character seriously refuting the idea that homosexuality is a mental illness. This absence is a serious shortcoming in the reflection of more recent social and psychiatric thought.

The second line of the play, "The doctor canceled!" and the subsequent discussion of Donald's mental problems support the contention of a large part of society and of the psychiatric profession that homosexuals are mentally ill.⁵² Weinberg maintains that homosexuality per se is not an illness, but he feels that the psychiatrists have done an excellent job of public relations in selling homosexuality as a disease, and he feels that the selling job was successful even among many homosexuals:

. . . millions of homosexual men and women have embraced the view of themselves as sick, and in the nineteen-fifties even representatives of the homophile movement in public appearances would sometimes stand up and stutter and plead that they could not answer with certainty the question whether they were sick.⁵³

Perhaps in 1968 it was valid for Crowley to have made a statement regarding the "illness myth," and that statement might have been a true reflection of the

prevailing mode of thought. Recent events, though, have made that reflection "inoperative," and homophile leaders resent its presence in such a contemporary drama.

So Crowley's play presents quite a paradox in the development of dramatic homophilia and valid homosexual identity. On the one hand he provided the public with a view of homosexuality which had never been available before, and it has not been matched in sheer numbers of audience members it reached. But, in the view of many homophile spokesmen, such as Merle Miller, Donn Teal, Jim Kepner, and David Roggensack, the overall effect of the play was to portray homosexuality in a negative manner.

David Gaard, in And Puppy Dog Tails, attempted to rectify some of the negative homosexual attributes left in the public's eye by The Boys in the Band. He was aware of the verity of some of the negative attitudes expressed in Crowley's play, but he felt that there was a need to stress some of the positive attitudes which are inherent in homosexuality:

I wrote about what I saw. It was about what I was about and what I was in to. Gay people are, they still are, horribly misrepresented on the stage. I think Puppy Dog Tails is more positive about being gay; I was specifically aware of that [misrepresentation]. I am inclined to look at life positively instead of negatively, and it bothered me that something that I was was being painted as something it was not to me. And to everyone I knew it was not. I know things like [the negative elements in The Boys in the Band] go on in the world, and that [representation] is dramatic and that is valid. But there were other things, and I just think we should look in those windows.⁵⁴

Crowley presented eight homosexuals; Gaard presents three, and they differ from Crowley's more in effect than in kind. The three types are the man who could pass as heterosexual, John; the very effeminate "camper," Tommy; and the median man who possesses characteristics of both the others, Carey-Lee. John and Carey-Lee are lovers; Tommy is their neighbor and friend.

Gaard does not give a one-sided view of homosexuality. His characterization of Tommy encompasses many of the negative attitudes which homophiles gainsaid in their reactions to The Boys in the Band. In basic characterization, Tommy is quite similar to Emory, Crowley's effeminate character. He is very campy. He identifies with female camp personalities such as Judy Garland, Bette Davis, and Joan Crawford. Tommy is a spendthrift, is worried about his age, and drinks to excess.

He is rather insistent in his attempts to seduce Bud, but Bud is not responsive. Tommy is stung by the rejection and is resentful of the masculine identity Bud possesses. Tommy, like Emory, provokes the heterosexual into taking a reactionary stand against homosexuality:

TOMMY: Hey, Bud, let's go down stairs and play hide the weenie . . . You know, make love, not war.

BUD: Do you enjoy acting like a faggot?

TOMMY: . . . let's just get everything out in the open.

BUD: I don't know what you mean.

TOMMY: The hell you don't. I've seen boys like you too many times on their knees in the man's room of the greyhound bus depot with their tongue through the glory-hole!⁵⁵

Tommy's aggressive behavior is only a defense mechanism to hide his true unhappiness. He is lonely as a homosexual, and Bud senses this loneliness and unhappiness. Bud damages Tommy's ego with an attack on Tommy's lack of masculine values. He also points out that Tommy has never been accepted by the type of male with whom he would most like to identify.

In a maudlin speech Tommy acknowledges his fondness for Bud and Bud's correct evaluation of his situation. This speech also touches on the reasons for Tommy's homosexuality, hinting that the "fault" is his mother's. It also indicates Tommy's resilience in recovering from an ego-destructive attack:

I . . . want someone to be there. Oh, shit, he was right. I didn't have a buddy, and that hurt--and it hurts when you aren't invited to play baseball, and they tease you about those clothes your mother keeps buying for you when all you want to wear are levis and plaid shirts. (TOMMY HAS DISSOLVED INTO QUIET TEARS OF SELF-PITY. CAREY-LEE CROSSES TO HIM TO COMFORT HIM. THEN TOMMY BOUNCES BACK WITH A DISPLAY OF BRAVADO). And, for the best performance by a faggot in the east fifties, (CAREY-LEE HUGS HIM. TOMMY HOLDS UP HIS MIRROR AS AN ENVELOPE.) the envelope please.⁵⁶

In spite of his desire to write a play which would not paint a negative picture of homosexuality, Gaard has created a character with much the same undesirable characteristics as many of those portrayed in The Boys in the Band.

Specific homophobic behavior and attitudes in this play are all revealed in Bud, the high school friend who has just come to town and wants to renew friendship with John. Bud does provide a good homophobic device, unfortunately Gaard does not develop his character as well as he might have. This deficiency weakens the final impact of the triumph of homophilia over homophobia, because the homophobic adversary is not up to the battle.

A true determination of the motive behind the actions of the heterosexuals in both these plays is difficult to ascertain. In The Boys in the Band, for instance, why does Alan call Michael in the first place? And why does he remain at the party when it becomes evident that he has no place there, and that he is in danger from Michael's hostility? These questions remain unanswered in Crowley's play. However, the enigma of Alan's characterization is not nearly so incredible as Bud's implausible behavior and rationale. As an example, at the end of the first act, Bud and John are in bed, stoned from smoking marijuana, facing each other in a kneeling position. The following stage directions

describe the scene and action:

(FOR ONE BEAT THEY KNEEL THERE LOOKING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES. SLOWLY JOHN MOVES HIS HAND BETWEEN BUD'S LEGS. BUD TAKES HIS HAND AND MOVES IT BETWEEN JOHN'S LEGS . . . THE ONLY MOVEMENT IS A SLOW AND GENTLE MOVEMENTS [sic] OF THEIR HANDS AND WRISTS.)⁵⁷

In spite of this scene, Bud later protests, "I'm not a queer and neither is John."⁵⁸ Further, when Carey-Lee states that he and John are lovers, and that they "lay on that bed and make love," Bud retorts, "That's a filthy lie."⁵⁹

The motivation for Bud's homophobia is also unclear. At one point he expresses revulsion at the thought of love between two men, and at another point he protests to Tommy and Carey-Lee an inability to participate in the homosexual act, even though he has already done so:

BUD: My God, this could make you sick! This is disgusting.

CAREY-LEE: I'm sorry Bud, I don't think love is disgusting.

BUD: Between two men?⁶⁰

• • •

BUD: What's with you two? You both make me sick--I don't know how John could do something like this--but I'll tell you, I couldn't. I just want to heave when I think about doing these things.⁶¹

Carey-Lee and Tommy merely defend their proclivities; John, on the other hand, asks Bud to defend his homophobia. Bud is unable to provide a valid argument. He is limited to statements as ". . . it's sick to be

that way."⁶² This facile reasoning further weakens Bud's credibility as a valid antagonist. Clearly Gaard has intentionally kept him weak so that the stronger homophilic statement would emerge virtually unchallenged.

John, the play's most complete character, is also the strongest example of homophilia.

He is characterized as shy and quiet; he is rather conservative and reticent in his homosexual behavior. When Carey-Lee behaves too effeminate, he says, "You've changed while you've been away . . . Well, calm down. You're back in the city again."⁶³

But John is a cautious homophile. He does not want his family or Carey-Lee's family to know of their affair. He took the trouble to camouflage letters to Carey-Lee to avoid detection. "I kept using different people's return addresses to throw [Carey-Lee's mother] off the track."⁶⁴

Like Michael in The Boys in the Band, John is reluctant to have his straight friend discover his homosexuality. He admonishes Tommy to behave in a socially acceptable manner, and displays some anger when Tommy does not respond with the proper air of seriousness:

TOMMY: (RISING, TAKING PILLOW AND PUTTING IT UNDER HIS SHIRT). Just tell him I'm your unfortunate sister from Cleveland.

JOHN: (RISING TO GRAB THE PILLOW FROM TOMMY, REPLACING IT, AND PUSHING TOMMY AWAY FROM THE SOFA). Now damn it, that's just the sort of things I'm worried about.⁶⁵

Ultimately John proves to be a conservative homophile with an activist bent. At one point in his youth, he decided that he was not happy with the direction of his life, and he took steps to change its direction. "You can stop making yourself so goddamn miserable if you do something about it instead of laying [sic] around all day wallowing in your misery."⁶⁶

When it becomes necessary to defend his homosexuality and his relationship with Carey-Lee, as well as his past relationships with Bud, John does so in a straightforward manner that is not deferentially defensive. He displays a great deal of mature understanding and gay pride in his conversations with Bud. His reasonings relate principally to the sharing of emotion with another human being. He considers this a staple element in the quest for personal happiness:

I'm trying to make a happy life for myself, Bud. Can't you see that? Carey-Lee makes me very happy. I love him. And we have a good life here together, and that's what's important . . . But, it doesn't matter who I love, it matters that I love, and that I can share my life with someone, it really wouldn't be much if I couldn't.⁶⁷

I CAN NOT believe that it is unnatural for two people who care very deeply for each other, to try very hard to make each other happy . . . I'm sorry that you can't understand how I feel. Bud, I don't care what you do--to whom--that really doesn't matter to me. What matters to me is that I'm happy, and that I'm fulfilled.⁶⁸

To further enhance his homophilic stature, at no point in the play is John made⁶⁹ to explain his homosexuality or point the finger of "blame" at anyone.

Gaard protested the frequency with which homosexuals in plays had to apologize for their way of life, or welcome a conversion to heterosexuality;⁷⁰ this does not happen in And Puppy Dog Tails.

The dramatizations of these homosexual myths and homophobias and homophilic responses to those phobias in And Puppy Dog Tails are superficially executed. Gaard, as noted, admits his weakness as a playwright in this, his first, script. Indeed, the fact of the play's existence is almost accidental. Gaard happened to have access to a typewriter and paper one day, and he sat down to write a play. And Puppy Dog Tails was the result.

Gaard feels that the importance of his play lies in the conflict to be found between Tommy and Bud:

The play is about John and Bud and that moment when you realize that you are not who you were. But the play is really a construction between Bud and Tommy. The play is about the contrast between the ideology between these two people.⁷¹

As a playwright depicting a moment of realization, Gaard is quite successful. Throughout the play Bud tends to reject facing up to his maturity, "Sometimes I [wish] I never grew up . . . I liked being a kid better."⁷² John disavows this attitude during their confrontation, "one of the things everyone learns is that you can't spend the rest of your life running bare assed through the woods going swimming with the guys."⁷³

John has a special moment when he realizes that his life is no longer the childhood dream he thought he was living. His youthful memories must now be regarded from the view point of a mature man:

I guess one of the things I learned that night [during their recent sexual encounter] is that two men, [Bud], half stoned on grass, instead of three two beer, can never again run bare assed through the woods . . . what I loved was perfect, what came to New York was an all too mortal man who was worried about getting a job, and needed a place to live and had dandruff.⁷⁴

On the point of the contrast of ideologies between Bud and Tommy, Gaard is less successful. He does not resolve their conflict. Neither Bud nor Tommy has any sort of lasting impact on the ideology of the other. Bud has been ineffective in arguing against homosexuality, but he has been successful in exerting ego-destructive damage on Tommy. Tommy has not forced Bud into admitting that the relationship between Bud and John had homosexual overtones, but Bud's faith in himself and his relationship with John has been shaken.

Undoubtedly the clearest point of contrast between these two plays is the mood established in their closing moments. The Boys in the Band ends of pessimism and loneliness: Donald is left reading alone while Michael departs to attend a Mass. And Puppy Dog Tails ends with a statement of optimism: John and Carey-Lee embrace in an atmosphere of affection and mutual concern:

CAREY-LEE: It's strange when you aren't sure who you are, and you're all alone and mixed up . . . but, somehow, you make do . . . John, once you told me that if two people in the world truly cared for each other, nothing else mattered. That would be enough. They could make each other happy. (JOHN TURNS TO CAREY-LEE FOR A MOMENT. HE JUST STANDS THERE LOOKING AT CAREY-LEE AS CAREY-LEE BITES HIS BOTTOM LIP. HE WALKS OVER TO HIM AND THEY EMBRACE AS THE MUSIC SWELLS. THE LIGHTS FADE OUT AND THE CURTAIN FALLS.)⁷⁵

This ending affirms the validity of the homosexual "marriage," and, inferentially, it affirms the validity of the homosexual life style. It also constitutes a strong refutation of the pessimistic ending of Crowley's play.

Critical response to And Puppy Dog Tails varied according to various levels of critics' dramatic taste and degree of homophilia or homophobia. Critics for the heterosexual press generally gave it negative notices. Walter Kerr described it as "a foolish little primitive designed as a striptease for the homosexual trade."⁷⁶ Clive Barnes is reported to have found sexual portions of it "embarrassing."⁷⁷ The implication was that he was not ready to watch two men making love.

Homosexuals and homophiles did not necessarily tout its dramatic artistry, but they did support it, as Teal reports:

Gays found it not only unembarrassing but completely natural. So that, determined to "adopt" this self-confirming comedy-drama--in revenge, as it were, on the success (1,002 New York

performances) of Mart Crowley's biting satire The Boys in the Band--gays bought Tails tickets! At its close on January 11, 1970, the play had attracted almost thirty thousand spectators.⁷⁸

In spite of its weaknesses, cliché-ridden dialogue, incomplete characterization, and obvious manipulation of thought, And Puppy Dog Tails did constitute a formidable refutation to the negative homosexual self-regard and the homophobic attitudes portrayed in The Boys in the Band.

Having reviewed more than twenty plays from the past twenty years, it is clear that significant changes in attitudes toward homosexuality have been manifested in the drama. Homophilia has progressed from subordination to dominance. The trend toward the dramatic presentation of a "valid" homosexual identity on the American stage has been firmly established. The most recent homosexuals, outside of The Boys in the Band, have all been infused with pride and dignity.

These changes are reflections, in part, of the growing liberalism of the nation's politics, the continuing education of the public, and the artists' determination to avoid compromise of truth for public support. These changes also reflect attitudinal changes in the homosexuals themselves. In various ways they have forced the nation to become aware of their problems, if not to accept their inclinations on equal terms. Specific homosexual organizations and their use of the

drama in their efforts to gain civil rights will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Notes

¹Donn Teal, The Gay Militants (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), pp. 84-85.

²David Gaard, interview, New York, N.Y., June, 1973.

³See footnote 2, Chapter Three, for a discussion of the Stonewall Riots.

⁴Mart Crowley, The Boys in the Band (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968), p. 37.

⁵Ibid., p. 39.

⁶Ibid., pp. 115-16.

⁷Ibid., p. 117.

⁸Ibid., p. 120. It is interesting to note that this situation of the effeminate attacking the heterosexual presages the Stonewall Riots which follow the opening of this production by a little more than a year. Emory's attack and the attack by the "drags" which began Stonewall resulted in the same thing: the more conservative homosexual is prodded into action after seeing his more effeminate counterpart beaten to the ground.

⁹Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹²Ibid., pp. 17-18.

¹³Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 103-4.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 75.

²⁰John A. O'Brien, Understanding the Catholic Faith (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1955), p. 166. My emphasis.

²¹Nicholas Lynn and Ed Tyler, It's Camp (New York: Salisbury House, 1965), pp. 3-4.

²² John Simon, "No Coward Soul."

²³ Crowley, p. 15.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 111.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 112.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 104.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 118.

³⁰ Teal describes Gay Pride as "pride in being gay . . . pride while being gay . . . pride in being a human being who, incidentally happens to be gay--and this latter consideration in no way alters that human pride!" (Teal op. cit. p. 78).

³¹ Crowley, p. 21.

³² Ibid., p. 20.

³³ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 128.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 82.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 119.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 125.

³⁹ David Roggensack, interview, New York, June, 1973.

⁴⁰ Jim Kepner, interview, Los Angeles, August, 1972.

⁴¹ Merle Miller, "What It Means To Be A Homosexual," The New York Times Magazine, January 17, 1971, pp. 9-11.

⁴² Willaim Edward Glover, letter of April 17, 1972.

⁴³ Teal, p. 168.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 304.

⁴⁵ Weinberg, p. 114.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 137-43.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 142.

⁴⁸ A zap is a planned nonviolent disruption of a public occasion (Mayor John Lindsay of New York at a formal evening out being approached by homosexuals demanding his support of their position), an office, or a television show. They are planned to force various officials into making statement in public relative to the homosexual movement.

⁴⁹ Teal, p. 293.

⁵⁰Gay, "Psychiatric Association May Drop 'Sickness' Label," June 18, 1973, p. 1. The label was dropped in December, 1973.

⁵¹Teal, p. 298. To support the concept of homosexuality being a valid alternative life style, Kaplan notes that Hooker found no substantial differences between heterosexual men and homosexual men in the Rorschach test (p. 27).

⁵²In spite of the decision in December, 1973, to remove homosexuality from its list of illnesses, certain members of the American Psychiatric Association are petitioning to have the sickness label restored. See The Advocate, "Seek To Put Gays Back on Sick List," p. 12, January 30, 1974.

⁵³Weinberg, pp. 22-23.

⁵⁴Gaard interview.

⁵⁵David Gaard, And Puppy Dog Tails, unpublished play, copyright 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, pp. 59-60. (typewritten)

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 66.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 35b.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 62.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 63.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 64.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 65.

⁶²Ibid., p. 74.

⁶³Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 41.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 11.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 70.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁹In a rather candid statement about the manipulative process the author plays in the development of characterization and plot, Gaard stated, "When you write you get to do it exactly the way you want it done. You can have them behave." This is especially illuminating when taken into consideration with "messages" contained in the various original plays which will be discussed later. Not that complete objectivity is ever a qualification for a good play, but, aesthetically at least, lip service is generally given to objectivity in the guise of probability.

⁷⁰Gaard interview.

71 Gaard interview.

72 Gaard, p. 34.

73 Ibid., p. 70.

74 Ibid., pp. 72-73.

75 Ibid., p. 75.

76 Walter Kerr, God on the Gymnasium Floor (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 112.

77 Teal, p. 84.

78 Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DRAMA AS AN INTEGER OF SELECT HOMOPHILE GROUPS

The organized homosexual is relatively unique. As a general rule, homosexuals, fearing various social and legal sanctions, have tended to avoid any organization which might indicate their sexual proclivities. However, prompted by the civil rights gains of ethnic minorities, some homosexuals have organized in order to press for civil rights for persons of "deviant" sexual behavior, and in order to develop a valid homosexual identity.

The recent history of homosexual organizations indicates a similar development of public tolerance as was indicated in the development of dramatic homophilia. The groups of the 1950s maintained a low public profile and worked through the courts to establish basic civil rights for the homosexual, i.e., the right to use the United States Post Office for the dissemination of homosexual material. By the 1960s attitudes had changed to the degree that emerging organizations actively sought publicity through the use of zaps and marches. The closet homosexual is not a person of the past, but, just as a playwright has more leeway to explore homosexuality

in the 1970s than he did in the early 1950s, homosexual organizations have alleviated somewhat the necessity for homosexuals to maintain a double life.

Since 1952 the homosexual organizations in the United States have increased from a small number, possibly no more than five, to over seventy-one groups in 1971 which were "of interest or value to homosexuals."¹ Most of the organizations presently are local in nature, but two, the Gay Activists Alliance and the Metropolitan Community Church, do have branches in various cities. The branches, for the most part, are completely autonomous. Affiliations between groups is very tenuous in homosexual organizations.

Currently these organizations fall into three groups--social, religious, and political. They range in profile and philosophy from conservative, low-keyed organizations such as the West Side Discussion Group, to the militant, very public Gay Activist Alliance. The groups included in this study have a wide variety of primary functions such as legal aid, religious counseling, social opportunities, and entertainment factors. Each of them has had a history of some sort of theatrical endeavor. Some of these dramatic programs have been short-lived, but others have been, and continue to be, quite successful.

Of the various types of homosexual organizations, political action groups organized before "Stonewall"²

have been more conservative in their visibility than those organized after the riots. ONE, Inc., for example, tends to sponsor speakers' bureaus and select social gatherings, while the Gay Activists Alliance of New York seeks to bring publicity to its efforts through zaps against legislative bodies or organizations which it feels espouse material detrimental to the welfare of the homosexual.

The political homosexual organizations have had some success in bringing a positive awareness of the homosexual to the general public. Indicative of this success is the lobbying in various state and local legal entities which has resulted in liberalized sex laws in eight states,³ and local ordinances in several towns, all of which prohibit discrimination because of sexual bias. (In point of fact, such legislation is generally of an "umbrella" nature, which includes such disparate elements as homosexuality, female discrimination, and communal living.) Efforts have also been undertaken to have the Federal Government cease its discriminatory hiring and firing practices against homosexuals. The Government's practices stem from President Eisenhower's Executive Order 10450, dated April 27, 1953, which reads in part: "(iii) Any criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct, habitual use of intoxicants to excess, drug addiction, or sexual

perversion."⁴ This sub-paragraph effectively denies gay employment in the Federal Government.

The notable legal change regarding the consensual homosexual act has been surprisingly widespread and not particularly restricted to states with reputations for liberal attitudes. For example, The Advocate reports on liberalized laws in North Dakota, "If the repeal sticks, conservative North Dakota--which has no gay bars--will become the eighth state in which homosexual acts in private are legal."⁵

On the other hand, the two most liberal states in the Union, and the states with the largest homosexual populations, California and New York, have not changed their laws regarding private homosexual acts.

On occasion, however, the actions of the more vocal homophile have had some negative result. In Idaho, in 1971, sweeping changes in sexual legislation were effected. Consensual homosexual acts were not proscribed. Religious pressures were brought to bear on the 1972 Idaho legislature, brandishing the copies of The Advocate which announced the legislative changes to the homophile community. Lawmakers, responding to the pressures of the new lobbyists, repealed the entire 1971 sexual legal package. Homosexual acts are once again illegal in Idaho.

Legal entities other than legislative are calling for repeal of the restrictive sexual laws of various

states. The most recent occurred in the summer of 1973 at a meeting of the American Bar Association. The lawyers "adopted a resolution which urges the states to repeal all laws prohibiting private sexual behavior between consenting adults saving only those portions which are necessary to protect minors or public decorum."⁶

Coinciding with legal changes, the psychiatric profession is beginning to redefine homosexuality in terms of it being an acceptable alternative life style rather than as being an emotional aberration. In December, 1973, the board of trustees for the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the Association's official list of mental disorders.⁷ Earlier one of the Association's vice-presidents had urged "that homosexuality could be considered a valid alternative life style rather than as a diagnosable mental disorder."⁸ Since lawmakers are greatly influenced by professionals in fields related to legislation, such a step could enhance the chances of further successful changes in sexual legislation.

The stated purposes of the organizations studied in this dissertation vary greatly. The Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) and the Society for Individual Rights (SIR) are primarily one-issue⁹ political organizations. It is their goal to establish legislative support for homosexuals. ONE, Inc., and the Homosexual Information Center could be considered sources of information for

anyone interested in the homophile field; they also provide speakers for the public, and, in the case of ONE, for their members. The primary purpose for the West Side Discussion Group is to provide a forum for gays who wish to discuss problems peculiar to their life style. The Metropolitan Community Church provides a religious outlet for gays. The Society of Pat Rocco Enlightened Enthusiasts (SPREE) is primarily a fan club for Pat Rocco films, but it has evolved into an important social group. The Cockettes are semi-professional entertainers. They are not organized homosexuals as such, but through their costuming and material they have shaken up many fundamental concepts regarding role playing. Thereby they espouse certain sexual liberties which would benefit the whole society, not solely the homosexual in that society.

ONE, Inc.

In the years following World War II, several homosexual organizations were established. Nineteen forty-nine saw the formation of the Quaker Emergency Committee and the Veterans' Benevolent Association in New York and the Knights of the Clock, Incorporated, in Los Angeles. In 1950, in Los Angeles, the Mattachine Foundation was orgainzed.

These organizations soon disbanded, either out of fear of discovery of membership or disinterest in the

social aspects of the group. The Mattachine Foundation, for example, dissolved because members did not trust in the security of membership lists. The Foundation was organized, unfortunately, during the early years of political activity which culminated in the McCarthy Senate hearings. During the ten-year period from 1946, the House Un-American Activities Committee, especially, was investigating alleged treason, and allegations of homosexuality often were made. People were fired or blacklisted on mere assumptions. In this atmosphere it is little wonder that the Mattachine Foundation was rife with suspicion and mistrust.¹⁰

ONE, Inc., was founded on October 15, 1952, in Los Angeles. It is a direct descendant of the Mattachine Foundation, and it is the longest-lived homosexual organization to emerge from those years.

The founders of ONE, Inc., were determined to establish a group dedicated to assisting the homophile movement through education, publications, research, and social service.

The Education Division was charged with the establishment of the ONE Institute of Homophile Studies. The Institute conducts classes for adults on a regular semester basis. It is responsible for conducting extension lectures in cities other than Los Angeles.

The Publication Division is responsible for the selection, editing, and publication of books which are

deemed of interest to the homophile movement. It also publishes a magazine and the organization's house-letter.

The Research Division of ONE, through its Research Council, must "stimulate, sponsor, aid, supervise, and conduct research of every kind and description pertaining to socio-sexual behavior."

The function of the Social Service Division is designed to integrate the homosexual as a group member into the larger society. It is also charged with alerting the society at large to its own responsibilities regarding the homosexual and homosexuality.¹¹

ONE's accomplishments have been many and varied. It did publish the first nationwide magazine for and about homosexuals, One, and it successfully litigated for use of the United States Post Office facilities for disbursing the magazine. It has held symposiums, sponsored a lecture bureau, held internal lectures, and generally provided a base of operations upon which later homophile-homosexual groups could build.

ONE's Homophile Institute generated an interest in dramatics. One course in particular, "Homosexuality in History," led to the discovery of homosexuality in the early drama and ritual. The course then traced aspects of homosexuality in drama to the present day through thematic material, transvestism, castrati, and breeches roles in drama and opera. Dorr Legg writes,

"to have ignored drama [in our organization] would have been to ignore homophile history."¹²

Dramatics productions entered into ONE's picture a little over four years from its incorporation. On January 27, 1957, the mid-winter lecture was "'Dramatic Readings from Mann Doll,' a play by James Barr, performed by the Drama Department, ONE, Incorporated."¹³ This was the twelfth lecture offered by the group for its private membership.¹⁴

In subsequent years, the following dramatic, or theatrical, presentations have been recorded:

2/1/58 "The Patterns of Sparta," a dramatic reading, Miss Rachel Rosenthal, Drama Department, ONE, Incorporated.

1/31/59 "An Afternoon of Poetry and Short Plays," Drama Department, ONE, Incorporated.

1/31/60 Game of Fools, play by James Barr, performed by Drama Department, ONE, Incorporated.

1/28/62 "An Afternoon At the Theater," Drama Department, ONE, Incorporated. Attendance, 58.

5/6/62 "The Personality and Poetry of Cavafy," R. H. Stuart, actor. Attendance, 25. [Concert reading in costume]

10/6/63 "The Eternal Quest," Drama Department, ONE, Incorporated. Attendance, 67. [Concert reading short scenes]

5/3/64 "Homophile Kaleidoscope/House of Roses," Drama Department, ONE, Incorporated. Attendance, 97.14.

1/30/66 "A Night at 'Instant Theater'," Rachel Rosenthal, King Moody and cast.¹⁵

It would seem that these early ventures into dramatics were prompted by the need to break up the

business aspects of these monthly meetings by presenting a yearly meeting which was oriented toward entertainment. The other recorded titles of lectures deal with sociological, legal, and personal problems.

The early productions were held in private homes and featured the talents of various members of the group. They laid the groundwork for the more ambitious productions by and for homosexuals which were to follow in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Dorr Legg and Jim Kepner, officers of the Corporation, discussed the February, 1959, presentation, "An Afternoon of Poetry and Short Plays:"

Dorr: This was really one of our most ambitious [programs] . . . first . . . we had poems of the Greek anthology and the sonnets of Michaelangelo. Those were simply readings. Then we had one of our members who was a professional Spanish dancer do a bit, [followed by a] sort of concert reading of poems by Houseman and things like that by a professional actor . . . two men read the poems. Then Rachel Rosenthal came on in a [brief costume] and did these [dances], and this of course was what was so sensational . . . no one had ever been quite that nude ever on a stage before . . .

Jim: She was dressed in flesh tinted gauze.

Dorr: Well, she had a couple of fern leaves here and there and that was about it. Then we had two very delightful plays, which were originally written for the occasion. The Moon Theme which was an oriental fantasy, written by Doyle Eugene Livingston.

Jim: Very much in a Ray Bradbury style. It was in black furs.

Dorr: And quite good. And then we had a thing called The Stairs which was a parody of Ionesco's The Chairs. Written also for the occasion, and was a great success. Those plays were both

destroyed; no copies of them exist. The author said, "Well, I don't like them" Threw them away. So we never had copies of them. Unfortunately.¹⁶

Other early presentations were just as varied in format, with one notable exception. In 1960 a full production was accorded to Game of Fools, a play written by a well-known homosexual author, James Barr. However, because of the production problems encountered, this has been the only full production attempted by ONE.

In 1962 the group returned to a format which featured variety and rather loose coordination of subject matter, as shown in this reproduction of the program for that day:

Sunday, January 28, 1962

3:00 Antonio Teyes, A Founder of O N E Presents -
AN AFTERNOON AT THE THEATER

Master of Ceremonies: Rolando

Opening - The Ballet Rolando

1. Mike Rusk "I've Got a Crush on You."
 "The Boy Next Door."
2. Rita Stroska "Spanish Lace."
3. Romonin Guitar Solo.
4. Sola "La Macarena."
5. Rita Stroska "You Do Something Me." [sic.]
6. Lisa Ben "I'm in Love With Some-
 one." original
 "That Old Gang of Mine"
 parody.
7. Peter Oliver
 Kilman Dialogues from "The Zoo
 Story."
8. Hank His Gepetto Marionettes.

Intermission

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 9. | The Rolando Dancers. | |
| 10. | P. E. Tritton | Poetry Reading |
| 11. | John Borragón | "Melody in F." |
| 12. | Al Hart | "I Don't Care." -Costume. |
| 13. | Mike Rusk | "Let's Do It." |
| 14. | Anabella and Juanico | "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me." |
| 15. | Lisa Ben | "Afro-Cuban Fire." "Promise You Won't Go." original "There Again." "Cruising Down the Boulevard." "Frankie and Johnnie." parody. |

Finale - Ballet Rolando¹⁷

Such wide diversity of modes of expression is often reflected by ONE. In addition to performances, the drama workshop met under the auspices of ONE's Institute of Homophile Studies. The Institute's catalogue offers "HS-134 DRAMA WORKSHOP. Reading and dramatic presentation of homophile poetry and plays. Coaching in self-expression."¹⁸ This course is followed by a continuation into a second semester. These courses were offered in the spring and fall of 1962/63. After a lag of seven years, they were offered again in the spring of 1970.

In 1970, the Drama Workshop at ONE was conducted by Ralph Lucas, a homosexual playwright-actor-dancer in the Los Angeles area. He studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and he did some professional and stock work in New York and Ohio. From February through June, 1970, he led a two-hour weekly workshop for ONE which consisted mainly of voice and acting exercises,

"going back into effective memory and stuff like that."¹⁹

However, Lucas found that the participants in the workshop were not able to function well under his tutelage:

My class was very shy and very introverted. Most of them had been under psychiatric treatment for years. None of them were able to take direction. It was very hard. I'm not that much of a director to get them to do anything on stage. They could not remember their movement and their lines together. They simply couldn't do it. Just to get them on a stage, in front of people, doing gay material was--a triumph! But I mean they could not learn their lines. I just should have plain gotten them on stage, taught them which was stage left and stage right, and how to say their lines.

Although ONE's audiences have been small, sometimes as few as fourteen, Lucas feels they are particularly receptive. Whereas some of the audiences for other organizations tend to be quite conservative, as will be seen in subsequent observations, ONE audiences are willing to accept something more than the "book" shows or shows featuring nudity.

Lucas discussed one show in particular which he did which called for a mature, responsible audience reaction:

On January 20, 1972, I did a one-man show for ONE down at the Hilton. It was for their 20th anniversary. I did a bit about a guy remembering his lover who was killed in Vietnam. I thought it wouldn't go well for several reasons: it's very heavy, and being I'm conservative politically, and it didn't make a statement for the war. It simply was that the guy was remembering things in the past, old things about two friends in high school. The opening line was, "Steve was an old fashioned boy. He liked to have his summer at the beaches, snow for winter, apple pie and the American flag." Then

I went on and did a whole story. Next I read a letter from the parents saying, "We know how much you loved Steve. He was killed in Vietnam." And so he folded the letter and repeated the opening line. It was a statement for a certain amount of patriotism, a certain amount of responsibility. And it did go over. I got a lot of compliments on it.

The nature of this script and the nature of the other entertainments mentioned indicate the range of drama presented for ONE. ONE, Inc., utilized drama primarily as entertainment for its business meetings, and as a vehicle for self-expression in its Institute for Homophile Studies. Productions and classes for the Institute are on an irregular basis, however. ONE does not maintain a person to head the dramatics programs. When someone has the time and the talent, ONE offers him the opportunity for an outlet.

Homosexual Information Center/Tangents

An internal ideological rift within ONE, Inc. resulted in the formation in 1965 of Tangents, which eventually took the name of Homosexual Information Center. The group has taken on the nature of a one-issue organization. W. E. Glover of HIC writes, "We provide the services our name implies. We are the oldest organization²⁰ and have twenty years personal knowledge and experience dealing with the areas of homosexuality."²¹ "We do what we say we do; we evaluate and we give out information on this one subject."²²

During its early years, this group followed patterns similar to those established at ONE, but eventually it worked away from socializing endeavors. Glover tells of the background for the decision to become an information source rather than a socializing outlet for gays:

We really felt that the whole idea of a gay organization [for socializing] was passé. We decided that after over 12 years of failing to get support from the vast majority of homosexuals who never, to this day, have done one thing to gain their own freedom, or first-class citizenship, that the idea was wasted. No one wanted, for instance, to give money to a gay organization.

But the group's major venture into drama, a production of The Women, was held before the development of this attitude.

We produced The Women because it was an interesting thing to do and the people involved were willing, for personal ego, to do it. No one else has done such an interesting thing, even though Time, has written up the latest production as if it were so unique. We, in fact, did not want a drag show, for we are not drag queens, dislike the stereotype. We had had other types of things and thought that this would be an interesting thing to do, as a commentary on the times. Much work went into it. It was, and may still be, the first and only publicly advertised gay organization benefit. SIR in San Francisco did something similar, but we advertised in public newspapers and had a public auditorium.²³ The program told the people exactly why we were doing it, for the homosexual movement.²⁴

A premise of the organization is that the homosexual differs from the heterosexual only in sex acts, and sex acts, per se, are not enough to warrant a separate, gay life style. Because of this they switched to an

information organization, eschewing the development of a separate, homosexual subculture:

We have no other such events [as the production of The Women] because they are also passé. We believe what we say, that we are not different, and are not any more artistic or cultural than any one else. We don't need "gay" clubs or plays, etc. We don't need "gay" V.D. clinics--there is no such thing as gay vd or straight vd, or a gay life-style, or whatever.²⁵

The Homosexual Information Center has little regard for the theatre's past presentation of homosexuals.

"[We] certainly don't think for a minute that the theatre led people to understand homosexuals; in fact it followed the mores of society and still presents only a limited view." But the group recognizes the efficacy of the drama, and other forms of creative endeavors, in presenting the homosexual point of view, if properly utilized. "We do say that there are some things that can be said better in fiction than in non-fiction. Sadly, most homosexuals have not been willing, even now, to do so."²⁶

The Homosexual Information Center's one venture into dramatic presentation was prompted by its obligation to offer its members a socializing and creative outlet. They also felt it would make some statement of the times. After the single production the nature of the group changed, and it was no longer obligated to offer any sort of socializing opportunities. The group's attitude toward drama is one of disappointment,

especially in the light of what drama could do in the homophile movement if it were properly used.

West Side Discussion Group

The West Side Discussion Group of New York City is a spin-off discussion group which originated in 1956 as part of the New York Mattachine Society. In 1965 WSDG severed its ties with the parent organization, and began holding weekly discussions instead of the previous monthly sessions. The primary purpose of the group is to provide a place for general discussion of homosexual problems, or problems peculiar to the homosexual. An introductory pamphlet explains, "We find that we prefer the opportunity to meet in an atmosphere other than a bar, to discuss with fellow homosexuals the topics relevant to us: our interests, problems, joys, our relationship with society in general and activities in the gay community and movement."²⁷ WSDG also provides various social events, free VD blood tests, counseling, and an "Escort Service" to assist in "passing" when a date with the opposite sex is appropriate.

After some unsuccessful attempts, a theatre group was organized from the WSDG in 1972. This segment of the organization seems to be thriving quite well. The first presentation of the group was given on November 17, 18, and 19, 1972. The program, Gaybill 1972, lists

"Four One-Act Comedies." They were The Palmer Way, by Nicholas Baehr; Three on a Bench, by Doris Estrada; She Was a Lazy Witch, and The Travelling Sisters, by John Kirkpatrick.

The group views drama as a medium for entertaining the membership, raising funds, and for educating heterosexuals about the varied aspects of homosexuals and homosexuality. WSDG's dramatic philosophy is printed in an essay in all the programs available from the several productions the group has sponsored since November, 1972:

Aims of the West Side Gay Theatre

Today's people of the world believe that we are the best informed of any society that ever existed. And to some extent, that is true. We have unearthed strange secrets on atomic energy; we have made enormous advances in the field of medicine; we have even been to the moon! But so many of us know of only one life style--that of the heterosexual. And this unknowing majority go through life believing that, "What you don't know won't hurt you!"

We of the West Side Gay Theatre believe that, "What you don't know does hurt you!"

Our aim is to find material that we can present to the public in an entertaining way--material that will portray homosexual life as it really is--to dispel the theory that the word "gay" is synonymous with the word "sex." To portray the truth--that we of the gay world are human beings first. And that sexual orientation is just another life style, as normal as any other.

The present company of the West Side Gay Theatre hail from six foreign countries and ten American states. We are male and female--black and white--christian and jew--doctor, lawyer and "indian chief." We represent society in every walk of life. We work for a living. We pay our taxes. We vote. We support our government. We live and we die in the service of our country.

In the play of yesterday, male must love female--the man had to be dominate [sic]--brave--drab--and most of the time, stupid. But a new day is dawning! Let us call it--"The Education of a Straight Society." Literature, film and TV have broken through the once unsurmountable barrier. Not all of it has been good--stereotyping the homosexual--calling this life style a condition, a mental illness. But it has been a breakthrough.

Our aim is to continue that drive. To carry the torch of enlightenment and understanding. Not to fight society but to reason with it. To prove that we are humans and that we want to live.²⁸

These words are perhaps a trifle stilted; however, the following excerpts from a letter from Ken Warren [pseudonym], an organizational Director of WSDG, provide glimpses into the more day-to-day activities and history of the theatre arm of WSDG.

Early efforts were plagued with various disappointments, but the picture changed when WSDG acquired a permanent home, providing the theatre group with a place for rehearsal and performance:

I suppose, like any other informal group, we've made several attempts over the years to establish a dramatic group. At best, we just sputtered along. About 5 years ago, we did an all male version of the domestic battle scene from Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (it worked beautifully!). We've had lots of very successful poetry reading programs over the years, with some excellent original works (and some pretty dreadful stuff, too). Most of the programs consisted of Walt Whitman, Shakespeare, and other well known published works. Then, about three years ago, we produced a variety show which most people felt was acceptable as an amateur production but not really of even off off-Broadway caliber. The admission price was too high and, with the theft of some supplies and equipment, turned out to be a financial disaster. Then, eventually we moved into our own center and several activities which had been

conducted on a hit-or-miss basis began to find a home and stability at the center. I don't believe a regular theatrical group would have been established even now, were it not for the reality of our own place.

Once the group had a permanent place to meet and rehearse, interest in a more active dramatic arm increased. A group organized and has been quite active in the past months.

Ed Trust [who has directed for WSDG] became active once again. It all just seemed to click. The shows which were produced sure showed the spark of life and then we discovered talent we didn't know existed at WSDG. This latest show, You Can't Take It With You [six performances in May, 1973], was really beautifully done (I'd say a good college level production). We used both girls and drags for the female parts and other incongruous combinations. And it was announced at last Wednesday's discussion that the group will try and establish a dance class--primarily as a body movement class. So, the group does seem to be moving along briskly.

Mr. Warren concludes his letter with a discussion of the immediate, tangible results from the group's dramatic endeavors:

What can producing plays do for the group that no other activity can accomplish? Make Money!!! (That's a harsh statement--but let me explain.) From a Director's standpoint (I mean a Director of WSDG), our expenses have always plagued us ever since we moved into the Center, and the theatre group has moved us away from financial crisis. In less pragmatic, but more human terms, I believe it has helped involve more people in a pleasurable activity than nearly any other at WSDG. West Side's main purpose is the enrichment of the individual gay. The theater group eminently supports this purpose.

I think we always had an interest for the production of shows, but most West Siders seemed to be interested in "Letting George do it." There really wasn't opposition to these ventures--just apathy!²⁹

The West Side Discussion Group's theatre group was late in coming to fruition, but the activity, which began in 1972, seems to have become firmly rooted in the general structure of the parent Group. As Mr. Warren's letter states, the West Side Discussion Group looks to its theatre group as a source of financial income and personal achievement for some time to come. So far the group has only produced royalty scripts, but plans are underway to establish a writer's workshop with an eye to producing original scripts which emerge from the membership. Hopefully these scripts will emphasize homophilic attitudes.

Each of these organizations is indicative of the homosexual organizations which were founded during the 1950s. The philosophies of each are similar: low public profile, some nudging for homosexual civil rights, and aid and counseling for homosexuals in need of such. These organizations tend to maintain a certain aura of conservatism, although ONE and the West Side Discussion Group are active in services to their members which preclude the low public profile enjoyed by HIC.

A radical departure from this low profile is observable in each of the groups to be studied which were founded during the 1960s. These organizations, CAA, SIR, Metropolitan Community Church, The Cockettes, and SPREE, are all quite active socially and publicly. They are indicative of other activist organizations of the

decade, with the exception that, being not quite so volatile, and thereby unstable, as the militant Gay Liberation Front, they indicate signs of concretizing into viable groups which might expect a long life.

The Society for Individual Rights

The society for Individual Rights (SIR) was founded in 1964 in San Francisco. The primary function of the organization is to secure civil rights and promote an attractive, healthy environment for the homosexual. The preamble of the Society's constitution reads like a manifesto for humanism for all peoples:

Believing in our democratic heritage and that ethical values are self determined and limited only by every person's right to decide his own, we organize under this Constitution for: the reaffirming of individual pride and dignity regardless of orientation; the elimination of the public stigma attached to human self-expression; the accomplishing of effective changes in unjust laws concerning private relationships among consenting adults; the giving of real and substantial aid to members in difficulties; the promoting of better physical, mental and emotional health; the creating of a sense of community; and the establishing of an attractive social atmosphere and constructive outlet for members and friends.³⁰

This preamble is a good example of the neutral aspect of homophile organizations in general. At no point is the word homosexual used. The goals stated are such as can be found in the United States' Constitution. Except for the unstated fact that this preamble deals with a homophile organization, there is little radical inference, and nothing to spark any sort of reactionary response to it.

Included among the services which SIR offers to the community and its members are voter registration, V.D. campaigns, smoke watchers, a blood bank, forums for political candidates, programs for the gay deaf, an alcoholic program, psychological rap sessions, senior citizens' lunches, a "watchdog" committee on legislation important to homosexuals, and theatrical productions.

SIR theatrical acitvities have long provided an outlet for individual expression and an income for the organization. The program of dramatics is basically divided into two areas: "book" [royalty] shows and the SIRlebrity Capades, which follow a variety show format.

The Capades began in 1965 and have been held every year since that time. The program consists of musical numbers worked up by individual cast members or under the overall supervision of a director. As with all of the SIR productions, all vocalizing is done by the performer. No record pantomimes are allowed, nor is it permissible for a male in female costume to sing in falsetto, unless a specific comic effect is desired. The Capades involve a large number of people. The 1968 show, for example, utilized a cast of twenty-three and a crew of seventeen. The gross profits of the Capades are turned over to the organization's general treasury. In 1971 the SIRlebrity Capades earned \$848.00 for SIR.³¹

Mr. Perry George, Productions Chairman for SIR in the summer of 1972, discussed the Society's dramatic history and some of the principles and philosophies involved:

We set up some principles that no one was to sing in falsetto; if people saw you dressed as a woman, they heard you as a woman. There wasn't any particular emphasis on trying to appear feminine. Somehow just acting talent would come to the fore. You had to kind of fit the part that you played, but it was a theatrical thing, and not necessarily a femininity/masculinity thing.

There was a controversy over whether we were going to have drag at all. In the beginning it was felt that SIR must put forth a positive image of the homosexual. I said, "Eventually, one of these days, [heterosexuals] are going to have to discover that every homosexual doesn't wear a suit and tie, live in Marin and raise Persian cats. If the homosexual is going to be accepted, all of them, we're going to have to tell the truth sooner or later. You can sell an illusion for so long, and then the truth is going to have to be told. And there are people who like drag. There are people who like leather. There are people who have variations of taste, and the general public is going to have to face the fact sooner or later. You might as well start with truth and then you don't have anywhere else to go." I made the statement that if anybody wants to stand up in a dress and make money for SIR, great. The money that's made off these productions helps keep the ship afloat, helps finance publications and this sort of thing. One of the big purposes of the Productions Committee was income for the organization to finance legal things, political action, things like this. It was a very functional, very necessary thing. They said, "All right. You put on a dress and you go on stage and that'll be the end of the argument." If I thought I could make money, I'd stand on the stage nude. I walked out in my black and white gown with blonde hair, and that was the official drag kick-off to SIR and doing "drag drama."³²

Bessie, the Bandit's Beautiful Daughter, a melo-drama presented in 1966, was the first script production

offered by SIR. It was done in conjunction with a "Gay 90s Revue." The evening was so successful that SIR decided to go into further dramatic productions. The decision was made to determine what was marketable and what wasn't being offered. The determination of the group was that "a campy musical done in an all-male thing would be just the thing." This led to a production of The Boy Friend. At this point the group went into a series of setbacks which culminated in the decision to stay close to the concept of mixing camp with an all-male cast.

After The Boy Friend the Productions Committee decided to present an evening of one-act plays, Fumed Oak, Final Dress Rehearsal, and a cutting from The Last Mile. Oak and Rehearsal are comedies, The Last Mile is melodramatic. The aura of success was absent from the reception given these plays. "I thought it was well done, but the audiences just weren't looking for this kind of theatre from us. It didn't lose any money, but it certainly was an artistic flop. The audience came, but they weren't terribly wild about it." The first policy decision became that of limiting themselves to musicals.

Pal Joey was the next venture. George indicated two problems, logistics and material, which developed during this production:

The logistics of trying to put on the show were too difficult. It looked great. It looked fabulous, but you had fifteen or twenty scene changes--hammering, people in high heels carrying canopied beds on and off stage. So we learned the illusion is better than the reality.

SIR productions, since that time, have attempted to keep the physical logistics of a show to a minimum.

The problem of suitable material which arose with Pal Joey dealt with audience appeal:

We learned that many plays have a heterosexual appeal only. Seeing a play about a big cunt man just didn't hold much allure during the long serious scenes, and thrashing about on the bed and all this sort of thing . . . a drag queen a foot and a half taller than the male lead--the whole thing was just a little macabre to the audiences.

The reception of the plot of Pal Joey irrevocably altered the attitude of the Production Committee in selecting future material:

Sure we could have gone out and tried Antigone maybe and hit it big. You don't know. But when you're risking production money, you've got to play it a little conservative and do the kind of show that people expect you to be able to do.

From this point the group has specialized in camp musicals:

You know, camp musicals and that sort of thing somehow seem almost better suited to drag than to non-drag. We've gotten into knowing our market expected this. If you gave this sort of a show, you could be guaranteed of at least a break-even thing. And this has been why the SIR theatre has evolved to this point. It has to be light, entertaining, and it has to be a decent story.

These considerations have imposed some restrictions on the play selection:

Whenever we consider a script, it can't have long, serious love scenes in it, and things like that, because people are still aware of the fact that it's a bunch of men on the stage, and it just looks strange.

In spite of these limitations, the SIR Productions Committee works in a very positive attitude: "That's sort of a philosophical, developmental idea of what we can do. You do what you can do best. It's become an area, a field that we've done."

Other titles produced by the group between 1966 and 1972 are: Little Mary Sunshine, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Anything Goes, Once Upon a Mattress, and Hello, Dolly! If financial reports can be used to judge whether or not SIR Theatre does certain musicals well, then the group is quite successful. The 1972 production of Dolly grossed over \$17,000.

SIR Theatre has not produced any original dramas. The one original venture was a musical called Yucatan Girl, which Mr. George views as an unqualified flop. "Everybody in the world thought it was the biggest dog that ever got trotted across the stage." One attempt was made to have an original drama produced, but Mr. George resisted on the grounds that the gay image projected by the plot was inappropriate. He was willing to produce works of unknown authors and use the profits of the financial successes to back some works without inherent audience appeal, but none were forthcoming during his tenure.

Mr. Kevin Norton, who succeeded Mr. George as Productions Chairman, indicates that SIR is, indeed, interested in doing "relevant" gay plays. A SIR Gay Theatre Workshop has been organized, and a production of Coming Out!, the gay documentary originally sponsored by GAA in New York, is in the planning stage.

Perhaps San Francisco is unique in that it has such a large homosexual population, but homosexual theatre in that city has proved to be a highly successful venture. And the gay community is fast becoming aware of the implications of this success:

It has been proven with complete definitude: 1) that an all-male cast can successfully sustain the illusion of female guises for an entire play; 2) that the play can, in some instances, be even further enhanced by this unique and different interpretation; 3) that there is a vast audience for this type of show. However . . . having achieved this degree of sophistication and maturity, where does Gay Theatre now go? . . . Gay Theatre should start developing a consciousness of its own. And this awareness need not be solely the morbid depictions of the gay condition as seen in Boys in the Band. It can be joyous and exultant, with no apology . . . if the emphasis in the majority of gay plays being written is on the morbid and depressing aspects of gay life, then young writers should be encouraged and prompted to write original works and revues which depict the total gay experience.³³

Between SIR Production, and various spin-off production companies from SIR, and the Cockettes, San Francisco's Gay Theatre seems destined for a long and healthy existence.

The Cockettes

The Cockettes is a San Francisco-based group of entertainers who occupy a special place in homosexual theatre. They are included in this study even though they do not, literally, fall into the category of an organized homosexual group. They are all homosexual, some with bisexual inclinations. They are important because of their surrealistic thematic material, the use of "radical drag"--combining obvious sex-role differences in costume, also known as "gender fuck"--and their rapport with younger people. They are important leaders in breaking up the concretized socio-sexual roles assigned to the male and the female.

The genesis of The Cockettes, in the late 1960s, was almost accidental. A neighborhood Chinese movie house in San Francisco, The Palace, featured a Friday night midnight show called "The Nocturnal Dream Show." The films featured, according to Frank Bourquin, a member of The Cockettes, were "a lot of surrealistic stuff, a lot of old stuff."³⁴

Members of the audience soon became caught up in the ambience of the films. They began to express themselves surrealistically when they attended these movies:

After they'd been going a few weeks, a big gang of kids, mostly boys, showed up in really, really exotic, outrageous getups, featuring a lot of feathered headdresses, almost like Ziegfeld Follies girls' headdresses, but everything was made of scraps and rags and things fished out of

garbage cans. That was supposed to be the whole point of it--nothing was supposed to really be good or cost any money. It was just all for fun. They were invited to put a little skit together since they'd become such a standard feature, the audience was coming as much to see them in the audience as to see the movies. And then they started becoming a regular feature of "The Nocturnal Dream Shows" every weekend for a while.

Even naming the group had an aura of spontaneity about it:

I think the idea [for the name] was originally based on the Rockettes like the Radio City Music Hall--The Rockettes, that was everybody's idea of big-time glamour--Radio City Music Hall. It was just a take-off, and also there was "coquette." It was a sort of combination of the words rockette and cock and coquette, and it was just a really funny name. The audience really dug the name because it kind of has an outrageous quality just to say it.

The organization of the group is very loose, and not at all like the organizations otherwise mentioned in this study:

It's not a cause kind of group. I mean we're not out fighting. We are and always have been interested in making a little money off the thing. Not strictly amateur. Everybody hoped to be able to make a living at it when we got so popular for a time, but it became obvious that there were just too many of us to make a living off the show. We'd get \$25 or \$30 for both nights of a weekend performance. There is a treasury with some funds in it for building sets and for costumes, if we've got to have a group costume for one of our production numbers.

We did have a manager for a whole year and he was the one who really did most of the arrangements, to take us to New York and stuff like that, but there was a lot of contention between The Cockettes and our manager. We sort of came to the point where we decided that we wouldn't do any more shows for him at the Palace Theatre until our contract with

him ran out, and then work directly for the owners of the Palace, who want us back very badly because it's just a neighborhood Chinese movie theatre. We were bringing in more money than the place had ever made. Really, we would have lines around the block in pouring rains.

We rehearse our shows a lot. We rehearse a show every day for two weeks. There's no director, but we rehearse them. We didn't used to rehearse at all.

The use of drag and radical drag often comes in for criticism from people who are tightly constricted into sexual role playing. The Cockettes want people to respond to the juxtaposings of radical drag. They view restrictive sexual role playing as detrimental to the individual and to the society:

We're trying to break down that old barrier that occurs: "Because he's predominately interested in members of his own sex is a homosexual rigidly a homosexual, [and] has to follow some stereotyped kind of behavior as homosexuals are supposed to follow." We want to break down that whole thing and let people be themselves. We can accomplish it somehow through the young people by being outrageous; you can accomplish more [this way] than you can by being serious. Everybody sees the absurdity of it, of any sexual role that's clung to because it's expected, and that's the way people are supposed to act. If they're this or if they're that, they're supposed to act like this or that. If you break down the whole thing, nobody's embarrassed about their sexual orientation, maybe everybody'll want to try more of everything. Just be a full person, a full sexual person.

It is the concept of people trying "more of everything" that makes The Cockettes' influence so important to the homophile movement and, indeed, to all movements relating with the elimination of minority suppressions.

Each liberation gained by minority groups is reflected in the life style of every individual in the society: "In an overpopulated world, all too accustomed to oppression, this [movement to unrestricted sexual expression] may bring new freedom to millions . . ."³⁵

The Cockettes, protesting that they do not harbor any desire to be an institutional homophile organization, nor even giving much support to the concept of such organizations, nevertheless have found themselves caught up in the movement:

I'm not terribly excited about some of the gay rights groups as such. They're important, and they do good work--the idea of getting laws changed and liberalized is good for everybody--but somehow giving meaning to our differences sort of reinforces this separateness.

I think a lot of the more revolutionary younger gays really adopted us for their own, even though our shows are generally quite unpolitical. We don't appear at rallies or protests, but somehow it's implied through the surrealism of it that the Cockettes are anti-establishment, without being violently or vigorously so. Some people in the gay community think that we're a detriment, that being in the group presents more of a detriment. The conservative group seems to think that it's people like us that give perverts a bad name or something; I love it. I don't know who first said it, "It's people like you who give perverts a bad name." If you can understand that kind of humor, then you can kind of understand what The Cockettes are all about.

The group has strong opinions about the inherent value of their humor and entertainment:

What's positive about The Cockettes is that we laugh about everything, including being gay, and I think that lifts a lot of people out of their gloom about that kind of orientation. They take

themselves so seriously, and they try to explain it off in some sort of precise terms, but we take a poke at everything with our humor, including ourselves and our life styles and our sexual orientation. We make straights laugh at us, and we make gays laugh at us just as much. It's an exhilarating kind of thing. It makes people feel good. It makes a whole theatre full of people feel good, so you know, without knowing how to explain it, that it's positive. That it's a big positive thing, something really fun. People who would be really pretty profoundly turned off by the idea of going to a serious drag show, would really be disgusted by a drag show--teenage girls and such--love our show because we're the most merciless kidders and taunters of serious drag people who are around.

Somehow, by using the "merciless" taunting, The Cockettes feel they emerge with respect from all sides, and they are confident that they have accomplished something positive: "The straights go away knowing [homosexuals] are not monsters; gays are [less prone to] be a little serious about how they're treating themselves."

The material The Cockettes present is likened to surrealism and dadaism. Surrealism is expressed in thematic material and in costuming. Some of the plays have dealt with space trips, dude ranches, and a view of the Orient as Hollywood might have presented it. This material and its ambience has attracted an audience of mostly young. It has also gained recognition from well-known avant-garde artists. Andy Warhol entertained the group in New York and offered to give them an unqualified endorsement.

The audience is predominately but not entirely young; there are a lot of middle-aged people. There's a phenomenon that goes on

backstage that I really don't fully understand. Straight girls, especially very young straight girls, absolutely adore queer boys in drag. They just can't get enough. They just try to get in your dressing room--steal your lipstick and your shoes and stuff like that while you're trying to get dressed. And these girls are straight, I mean as far as their sexual orientation goes, and they absolutely just love us to death. Almost literally. [On stage], if you've got a following, they'll make so much racket you can't do your number. That's just understood. Somebody threw a bouquet of plastic flowers at me that weighed about seven pounds, and it hit me right in the head while I was trying to do a song. It's really great. There are quite a few young boys who came backstage, too, offering what they can, but mostly it's girls who just go absolutely crazy for The Cockettes.

Not everyone is quite so taken with The Cockettes.

In discussing some negative reactions, Mr. Bourquin recalled a critic's line, "having no talent is not enough," but The Cockettes are undaunted by such criticism. They continue bringing their special brand of entertainment to San Francisco and any other city where they're invited.

Metropolitan Community Church

The Metropolitan Community Church is an affiliation of nondenominational Christian churches run by and for homosexuals. The first such parish was founded in Los Angeles by Rev. Troy Perry. The Church now has associate pastorates and missions throughout the nation.

In Los Angeles the Church is run by a Board of Directors who are elected from the membership. They have the responsibility of the daily functioning of the

Church, and they are in charge of religious services. One activity is the MCC Players, a dramatic group charged with contributing to the cultural life of the Church as well as functioning as a fund-raising organization.

In the four years of its existence, the Church Players have had two directors, and they have presented four full-length dramatic works: Fashion, Rope, Josephine, which was a version of H.M.S. Pinafore, and Fairy Power, which was an adaptation of Iolanthe.

The dramatic philosophy of Los Angeles' Metropolitan Community Church was outlined by Mr. Tom Rust, director of the MCC Players in 1972:³⁶

I talked to Troy [Perry] as far as the drama group at the Church is concerned, and he feels that there is a need for the cultural part of life in the church as well as the religious part. He states many times in his sermons, "We are going to offer so many things to you that you're bound to find something that you're going to like."

Under the implementation of "cultural" events in the Church, the Players had to have officers, but pragmatically speaking, these officers are strictly titular:

We elected officers: president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, and I am the director. I have the last say so. It's almost like a dictatorial-type thing because this is the only way I personally feel that a drama group can work. Who makes the final decision takes the blame for anything that goes wrong.

Originally the Players had some part in the decision of the disbursement of profits made from the

productions. The financial arrangements to produce shows were made in the form of loans from the Church general treasury, which had to be repaid:

They loan us so much money, and we, in turn, have to pay back that money plus any profit that we make. At one time [Church] organizations could designate what they wanted the money to go to, like improvement of the kitchen. However, [we] can't do that anymore. We just put it back into the general fund, which upsets me a little bit because I would like to rebuild the stage, lights, better the sound system. Something we would find useful as well as the Church.

The Players' principal difficulties lie in its relationship with the Board of Directors. The Players have to be aware of the conservative nature of the Board as well as the Board's understandable concern for funds. The Board is willing to back the Players so long as at least a break-even financial return is assured: "If we lost money, it would mean taking away money from something that might be closer to the religious aspect of the Church." This financial concern overrides several choices for producible titles.

Whereas Mr. Rust firmly believes in religious drama, he feels that such presentations only lend themselves to production during certain seasons, and are, therefore, too limiting. If his group has to "break even," then it must present shows which will draw an audience. Mr. Rust has determined, like Mr. George of SIR, that a certain type of musical production lends itself to a homosexual treatment, and that "relevant gay drama" is, as yet, virtually nonexistent.

Another problem rests in the conservative makeup of the Board of Directors. A certain element on the Board is reluctant to have drama performed in the Church building, although they have consented to having visiting troupes perform religious drama in the main sanctuary. The subordination of dramatic needs to the primary function of the congregation is a reflection of Mr. Rust's awareness of his obligations to the Board of Directors:

I feel we're connected with the Church and the main function of the Church is the religious aspect. If there's somebody in the choir or somebody in the seminary group or something else, if there happens to be a meeting or a rehearsal of the choir or a prayer meeting or something else on the particular night we have rehearsals, then the drama group has to take second.

This subordination does not rest easy with Rust's concept of the larger implications of Gay Theatre. In order to broaden the scope of the Players, he plans for an affiliation with the Church which would allow the Players more flexibility:

I personally feel I can reach more people as a homosexual and as a homosexual director and as a homosexual actor by breaking away from the Church eventually. Because, again, you're under the auspices of the Board of Directors, and they dictate what you do and what you don't do. And, to the average audience, a church drama group is very amateurish. I want to get away from this idea. I don't want to get away from the idea that it's a homosexual group or a gay group, but I want to get away from the idea we're the run of the mill bad-talented homosexual group.

I want to take the group away from the Biblical church itself. I would like to get it

into a heterosexual audience because I feel that people, the heterosexual audience, would be afraid to come to the Church, to see anything that we might put on. I still want us known as the Metropolitan Players, connected with the Metropolitan Community Church, but I want to open it up more to the heterosexual world, and say, "Look, this is what we can do." We cater mostly to homosexual audiences right now.

It is Mr. Rust's feeling, then, that his drama group can be more effective than it is by utilizing the drama as an educational forum for heterosexuals as well as for a homosexual cultural item and fund-raising function.

I think the Board of Directors would go along with the idea [of separation], because some conservative members feel we shouldn't put drama on in the church itself. I would think they would go along with it in the sense that we would still emphasize the fact that we were from the Metropolitan Community Church. I don't mean completely break away. It's our parent. We should stick to it. The whole idea of gay theatre is lost if we are breaking away from the parent.

The MCC Players is only a small part of the Metropolitan Community Chruch of Los Angeles, but the group is active and ambitious. If the conservatism of the Board of Directors can be successfully overcome, the drama will undoubtedly grow in importance. If not, the group will probably continue to function, but the indications are that the present active members, who are quite active in Gay Theatre in Los Angeles, would become discouraged, and the group would, indeed, become a run-of-the-mill amateur church group.

The Society of Pat Rocco
Enlightened Enthusiasts

By June, 1969, Pat Rocco had earned a wide underground reputation for his motion picture productions. His movies were generally all male and featured as much nudity as possible under prevailing legal restrictions. That month a group of men met in Los Angeles to form a fan club for Mr. Rocco. The purposes of the founders were to encourage and support Mr. Rocco, enhance homosexually-oriented cinema, and provide a social organization for the fan club's members.³⁷

Since that first meeting, attended by fewer than fifty, the group has grown to include a membership list of several hundred. They meet twice a month, once for movies, plays, and socializing, and once a month for a group outing. The third purpose for forming the club has overshadowed the first two. A recent article describes the dominance of the socializing elements of SPREE:

[SPREE is] a gay social club, and as such is a service organization. Monthly SPREE meetings provide entertainment with an emphasis on male nudity in a wholesome atmosphere. In promoting a friendly, congenial get-together that has no other purpose than the promotion of gay entertainment, we feel we are filling a need. SPREE provides a fun meeting place and social outlet for non-drinkers who are basically neglected in our profit making community.³⁸

Mr. Rocco soon realized the potential of the club in providing him with actors for his movies, so he asked Mr. Gerald Strickland to establish and direct a

Drama Workshop. This was done, and information about the workshop and its purpose was published:

The Drama Workshop especially is interested in developing new talent for future SPREE programs. Some type of acting experience is a helpful asset, but is not a prerequisite. All that is really required is a professional, serious attitude towards the work, a time schedule that allows you to devote several hours per week to rehearsals, and no hang-ups about appearing in shows with homosexual-based themes, and, of course, no inhibitions about appearing in the nude. This is what our audiences want, and this is what we give them!³⁹

The Drama Workshop as such is no longer active at SPREE, but the concept of drama has not passed from the group. Each monthly meeting features a dramatic presentation of some sort. The present goal of the SPREE Theatre is to entertain the members, and to establish communication of some sort with the heterosexual community. In a pamphlet Mr. Strickland has written is stated, "we believe that living drama (or comedy) is one of the best means of promoting understanding and happy coexistence between people of vastly different sexual preferences."⁴⁰

The SPREE drama group functions very much like most groups which are a part of a larger organization. They meet in private homes for rehearsals, and they move into their theatre for a dress rehearsal. There is usually only one performance. On occasion they are asked to provide skits for various activities, banquets, and meetings, and once they took an evening of original skits to San Diego for presentation at a bar.

The most unique aspect of SPREE Theatre is its production of original gay plays. After the initial productions of the group, which were scenes excised from commercial plays, the material presented has all been original and specifically written for the SPREE players and the SPREE audience.

The first presentation was a cutting from Private Lives, followed by cuttings from Of Mice and Men, and Romeo and Juliet. An adaptation of Myra Breckenridge, entitled Myra Breckenbitch, was scripted for specific SPREE players, and the pattern for the following productions was set. Combining the successes of Of Mice and Men, which contained a nude male, and of Myra Breckenbitch, which was written specifically for the group, the Workshop's leaders began to concentrate on original scripts and male nudity. The nudity is especially important:

It is very interesting to have an actual nude person on stage. Seeing a guy nude on film is interesting, but when you see him right there on stage, the live body, better for the voyeuristic tendencies. A little more of a kick.⁴¹

Once the theatre group evolved from its original purpose of providing a training ground for potential male film actors, the tenor of the subject matter switched to comedy and/or homophile ideology "on a very third grade level."⁴² By its mere presentation, some statement of homophilia is being made, and, further, by

its presentation, some feel that a dire need is being fulfilled. "Even some of our worst shows were well accepted because the gay audience is so starved for gay theatre; you don't get it anywhere else."⁴³

The SPREE audience consists of a range of ages and sexes, as well as sexual preferences, but the majority of those in attendance are middle-aged men. Ralph Lucas, who is quite active in SPREE as well as in ONE, categorizes the SPREE audience as those who go to "see nude bodies . . . to be discovered [for Pat Rocco's films] . . . for social reasons, and, I think, to cruise. And there are some people who are interested in going on stage."⁴⁴

Mr. Strickland and Kelle both protest that SPREE is strictly nonpolitical and nonmilitant. Strickland writes, "there is never anything militant in the approach of the SPREE Drama Workshop."⁴⁵ However, the group has become important and influential enough for politicians to have sought them out, and they have been recognized by major motion picture distributors and producers as a significant force in advance releases and publicity showings.⁴⁶ When pressed, Kelle acknowledges the potential for the homophile movement which is inherent in such a large organization as SPREE:

We were in the parade [Gay Pride Parade], we were contacted for a political benefit, we did take a nude show to San Diego. We're all for the gay movement. We want somebody in there who's going to work for us, that's true, but we don't.

want to get SPREE involved in politics because basically it's strictly for fun and entertainment. We are defying the establishment in the fact that we are doing the nude thing.

Other than that nudity, however, SPREE maintains, officially, a posture of neutrality with regard to homophile political actions.

Gay Activists Alliance of New York City

The Gay Activists Alliance of New York City, on the other hand, is strictly a one-issue political organization, and their single venture into drama so far reflects this attitude. GAA was organized on December 21, 1969. The preamble of GAA's constitution makes the same humanistic demands as found in SIR's constitution. However, GAA's document is explicit and forceful in its specific advocacy of full civil rights and liberties for the homosexual:

We as liberated homosexual activists demand the freedom for expression of our dignity and value as human beings through confrontation with and disarmament of all mechanisms which unjustly inhibit us: economic, social, and political. Before the public conscience, we demand an immediate end to all oppression of homosexuals and the immediate unconditional recognition of these basic rights: The right to our own feelings . . . The right to be persons . . . To secure these rights, we hereby institute the Gay Activists Alliance, which shall be completely and solely dedicated to their implementation and maintenance, repudiating at the same time violence (except for the right of self-defense) as unworthy of social protest, and for-bearing alliance with any other organization except for those whose concrete actions are likewise so specifically dedicated . . .⁴⁷

GAA's determination and single purpose is most strongly indicated by "before the public conscience" and "completely and solely dedicated." These words clearly set out the goal of presenting the homosexual's viewpoint, and only that viewpoint, to the general public and the social institutions, with the intended goal of effecting meaningful change in the social attitudes towards the homosexual.

The chief public weapon of the GAA is the "zap," which is a confrontation of the membership and a person or persons of authority in some public or private institution who are of authority and who are publicly homophobic: "Politicians and persons of authority in society who contribute to the oppression of homosexuals are publicly exposed thru mass demonstrations, disruption of meetings, and sit-ins."⁴⁸

For its membership, GAA offers many cultural activities, among which is the Arts Committee. The purpose of the Arts Committee, as dictated by the parent organization, is to "explore ways in which the arts could be used to further the cause of gay liberation."⁴⁹ Under the auspices of this committee, a Drama Workshop was formed, which met for a brief period of time.

The Drama Workshop became involved in discussions of how best to utilize the drama to further the goals of GAA. Some wanted to do a royalty script "using all gay people who said that they were gay, not changing

anything;" others felt that the actual "content of the piece should be about gay liberation." At this point an impasse was reached, and the group settled for the compromise of meeting to do acting exercises, principally in the nature of Stanislavski's Method and Esselin techniques, until something organic would emerge from the group.⁵⁰

The Drama Workshop eventually disbanded, but something quite important in Gay Theatre did grow from it, the collaboration of Jonathan Katz and David Roggensack, the author and director of Coming Out!, the first agit-prop gay play in dramatic history.

The director of Coming Out! was David Roggensack. He has worked for several years in the theatre in New York as an actor and a publicity agent. He wrote of the genesis of Coming Out!:

Jonathan, being interested in history and research, had written "Coming Out." He showed it to me and I liked it. So he and I decided it should be performed, with me as director. We took the suggestion to the Arts Committee; they okd it; it was then voted on by the general membership at our regular Thursday night business meeting. It was again okd. This was necessary so that we could be allotted funds from the treasury, given rehearsal space, etc. Jon and I then held readings, cast the play and finally gave performances at the Firehouse during Gay Pride Week last year. All performances since then have been independent of GAA, though they have helped on one occasion with money.⁵¹

Even though the productions of Coming Out! have become independent of GAA, the sponsorship of the group in the first place provided the basic support for the

play. GAA's primary purpose has been well served by Coming Out! The play was viewed as instrumental in goading some homosexuals into action, "the play . . . managed to excite . . . predominately nonactivist gay audiences where rhetoric had failed."⁵²

Mr. Roggensack recognized one limitation on Coming Out! He chose to orient the production of the play to the homosexual/homophile audience rather than using it to proselytize heterosexuals / homophobes. Agit-prop drama, in his view, is most effective when used to stir the audience to action, not convert them:

It's for gay people mostly, because gay people need to know the accomplishments of gay people in America. There's too much consciousness raising to be done among gay people right now, and I think that if Coming Out! can do that, that'll be enough. I don't think that a straight person can empathize with it; it's too foreign to their emotional lives. Informative, perhaps, but that's all.⁵³

Mr. Roggensack mused on the future of Gay Theatre from the point of view of a theatre-minded activist:

I think that any good theatre that comes out of gay liberation for some time to come is going to be political theatre. And when the need for political theatre has passed, then I don't think there will be gay theatre per se. That's what I would consider ideal. Then there will be theatre about people who are gay, but who are other things besides gay. It will just be theatre about human beings, with those things that all human beings have in common. But I don't think it's possible for that sort of theatre to exist until gay political theatre becomes much stronger than it is now.

The drama emerging from the more radical homophile organizations formed during the late 1960s has been

generally more spectacular than that developed out of the relatively conservative fifties groups. SIR's spectacular musical, SPREE's nudity, and The Cockettes' radical drag epitomize the direction of homophile groups in their confrontations with social sanctions and restrictions.

A significant difference in what gay groups expect from the drama is evident from city to city and coast to coast. In Los Angeles the groups look to drama to provide an outlet for expression, a mode for entertainment, and a method to raise funds. San Francisco organizations also expect drama to provide an element of propaganda. In New York City, while the West Side Discussion Group uses drama for fund raising, entertainment, and expression, the Gay Activists Alliance sees it primarily as a tool for propaganda. GAA's single dramatic venture has received far more attention than WSDG's entire dramatic program. This accounts for the impression that East Coast gay groups have utilized drama's inherent ability to agitate more so than West Coast gay organizations.

From the modest beginnings in ONE, Inc., presentations to the lavish spectacles in San Francisco's Gay Theatre, it is clear that the drama, in all its scope as an instrument of subtle as well as bizarre expression, has become an integral part of the homophile movement.

Notes

¹Mike DuReve, ed., 1971 Homosexual National Classified Directory, second edition (Hollywood: The Tangent Group, April, 1971), p. 1

²In June of 1969, the New York City police raided a bar in Greenwich Village known as "The Stonewall." This bar was a popular dancing bar in homosexual circles. For one reason or another, some call it resentment against police harrassment, the raid resulted in several of the patrons reacting violently against the police intrusion, and the ensuing disturbance grew to riot proportions. Among certain homosexual elements it has become known as the "Stonewall Riot," or "Stonewall," and it became the rallying point for militant homosexual organizations. In memory of that raid, the last week in June has since been observed as "Gay Pride Week" by homosexual organizations across the nation. Rallies, meetings, and parades have marked the celebration. It was this event which spawned the air of militancy which is observed in many of the more recent radical organizations established by homosexuals.

³Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Ohio, Oregon, Hawaii, and North Dakota.

⁴Ed Jackson, "What Is 10450?" Advocate, October 11, 1972, p. 29.

⁵"North Dakota Legislature Approves Consent Code," Advocate, March 28, 1973, p. 1.

⁶Thomas Coleman, "Nation's Lawyers Call for Consent Laws," The Advocate, August 29, 1973, p. 1.

⁷"Sick no more," The Advocate, January 16, 1974, p. 1.

⁸Randy Wicker, "Psychiatrists Consider Reclassifying Homosexuality," The Advocate, March 28, 1973, p. 3.

⁹A "one issue" organization means that the group per se is dedicated to one issue only. The individual members are free to become involved in as many issues as they wish.

- ¹⁰ Humphreys, pp. 50-54.
- ¹¹ ONE, Annual Report for Year 1963, p. 2.
- ¹² Letter from W. Dorr Legg, ONE, Inc., August 2, 1973.
- ¹³ ONE Confidential, August-September, 1965, p. 9.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 9-13.
- ¹⁵ ONE Confidential, September, 1967, p. 10.
- ¹⁶ W. Dorr Legg and Jim Kepner interview, Los Angeles, August, 1972.
- ¹⁷ Excerpt from a program of the day's event.
- ¹⁸ ONE Confidential, September, 1967, p. 14.
- ¹⁹ Ralph Lucas interview, Los Angeles, August, 1972.
- ²⁰ Members of HIC maintain that their claim to being the oldest organization of its kind stems from the fact that some of them were founders of ONE, Inc. For a short period of time, both groups were publishing editions of one magazine. Mr. Glover writes, "we still legally, though not publicly, operate as ONE." This view is contested at ONE, Inc.
- ²¹ Letter from W. E. Glover, April 17, 1972.
- ²² Letter from W. E. Glover, June 27, 1973.
- ²³ The Embassy Theatre in Los Angeles.
- ²⁴ Glover, Ibid. ²⁵ Glover, April 1972
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ West Side Discussion Group "Welcome" Pamphlet.
- ²⁸ Gaybill, 1972, p. 2.
- ²⁹ Letter from Ken Warren, May 14, 1973.
- ³⁰ Society for Individual Rights, 1972 Directional Report.
- ³¹ Ibid.

³² Perry George interview, San Francisco, 1972.
Unless otherwise noted, all quotes relating to SIR are
taken from this interview.

³³ Noel Hernandez, "Gay Theatre and the Meaning of
Mame," Vector, December, 1972, pp. 40-41.

³⁴ Frank Bourquin interview, San Francisco, August,
1972.

³⁵ Humphreys, p. 172.

³⁶ Tom Rust interview, Los Angeles, August, 1972.
Unless otherwise noted, all quotes regarding MCC Players
are Mr. Rust's.

³⁷ Gerald Strickland, "Just What the Heck Is SPREE?"
SPREE News Pictorial, June, 1971.

³⁸ Gerald Strickland, "As I See It!" SPREE News
Pictorial, January, 1972.

³⁹ Gerald Strickland, "Hey Good Lookin' What 'Cha
Got Cooking?" SPREE News Pictorial, January, 1971,
p. 19.

⁴⁰ Gerald Strickland, "Just What the Heck Is SPREE?"
Pamphlet distributed at 1972 Gay Pride Parade in Los
Angeles.

⁴¹ Kelle [pseudonym] interview, Los Angeles, 1972.
Kelle, at that time, was director of SPREE Theatre.

⁴² Kepner interview. ⁴³ Kelle interview.

⁴⁴ Lucas interview.

⁴⁵ Letter from Gerald Strickland, May 22, 1972.

⁴⁶ Kepner interview.

⁴⁷ Arthur Bell, Dancing the Gay Lib Blues (New York:
Simon and Schuster, 1971), pp. 21-22.

⁴⁸ GAA Information Sheet.

⁴⁹ Letter from David Roggensack, April 9, 1973.

⁵⁰ David Roggensack telephone interview, April, 1973.

⁵¹ Roggensack letter, April 9, 1973.

52 "Acclaimed 'Coming out' to Play Again," Advocate,
September 9, 1972, p. 25.

53 Roggensack interview, New York.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN OVERVIEW OF FOUR REPRESENTATIVE SCRIPTS

This chapter deals with scripts which have been produced by some homosexual organizations. The purpose of the chapter is to determine the extent to which the production of a certain play reflected the homosexual organization's philosophy and enhanced the development of a valid homosexual identity. Obviously original or specifically adapted scripts will have more of an orientation to the homosexual organization than will the average royalty play. The bulk of the chapter, therefore, will reflect the production of scripts written for, or adapted to, a specific organization. The production of royalty scripts will be discussed, but in far less detail.

Of the works produced by the organizations in this study, fifteen of them have been royalty scripts, and between forty and fifty have been original scripts.¹ Although original scripts by far outnumber commercial scripts, the commercial presentations are integral to the development of the groups' dramatic programs.

Generally, except for GAA, the groups began their dramatic activities with presentations of commercial

scripts. This is true in each case where an original script program eventually developed.

The productions are generally self-sufficient. The props, and the costumes are acquired from the producing group and are made by interested members. Groups that have their own theatres own their lighting systems. There is no indication of costumes that were not constructed or previously owned by the company.

The production of original gay scripts dates from 1955, when ONE, Inc., published Game of Fools, and in 1960, when they staged it. Other than private productions, no steady theatrical gay activity is recorded until 1965. In that year HIC produced The Women. Soon after, in the mid-1960s, a surge of theatrical activity occurred. First, SIR productions began with the SIRlebrity Capades, which eventually led to the SIR Productions Committee and their lavish musicals. In Los Angeles SPREE and the Metropolitan Community Church began dramatic programs. And, in New York, GAA and the West Side Discussion Group experimented with the possibilities of drama.

The nature of the royalty scripts which were chosen for production often reflects the nature of the sponsoring organization. The more conservative the organization, the more conservative the play which was presented. Full-length "book" shows presented by some of these groups include: The Women, Fashion, Rope, The Boy

Friend, Bessie, the Bandit's Beautiful Daughter, Pal Joey, Little Mary Sunshine, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Anything Goes, Hello Dolly, and adaptations of H.M.S. Pinafore and Iolanthe. Cuttings from Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Private Lives, Of Mice and Men, Romeo and Juliet, Tea and Sympathy, and The Last Mile have been presented. One act plays produced include Fumed Oak, Final Dress Rehearsal, The Palmer Way, Three on a Bench, She Was a Lazy Witch, and The Travelling Sisters.

An element of special appeal for a gay audience is a prerequisite for successful box office in Gay Theatre. Each title mentioned has some element of homosexual appeal or of camp attached to it, with the exception of Pal Joey. It has already been noted that the SIR production of Pal Joey was not as well received as other SIR productions.

It has been the policy of directors and producers to avoid altering the texts of these plays. The general consensus of these men is that, merely by presenting these plays in a specifically homosexual milieu, the plays take on a special aura of homosexuality, and certain gay connotations become emphasized without doctoring lines. Two examples of special connotations are found in accounts of productions of Hello Dolly and Iolanthe.

In the Harmonia Gardens scene in Dolly, Dolly Levi is meeting Horace Vandergelder for dinner. When told that the order has been for chicken, Dolly replies that she couldn't face a chicken after the hard day she's had. The informed will know that "chicken" in homosexual parlance means an adolescent boy, generally referring to a sexual partner. The line had a varied reception, depending on the number of "straights" in the audience. One Sunday matinee, Mr. Perry recalled; "Maybe the whole house was thirty to thirty-five per cent straight, and they came to this line and it just went right on. Maybe a titter or two. But some nights it stopped the show."

Every line written in the script is delivered by SIR Productions. Mr. Rust's MCC productions, on the other hand, are extensively cut, but he does not add lines. Lines delivered after the cutting are the lines as written. "I don't change anything as far as lines are concerned," stated Mr. Rust. "It's the way I direct; it's the way they say these things. There's really nothing there, but it has the double meaning."

Rust selects plays with an inherent homophile appeal and lets the play and the nature of the production work to his benefit. Iolanthe deals with a member of the English Parliament who is half fairy. The fairies gain control of Parliament and pass laws conducive to fairy life. The name of the play was

changed to Fairy Power, and it was done during an election year. With the homosexuals' increasing involvement in political matters, the play thus assumed a special appeal for the gay audience.

The royalty scripts have to have a homophile appeal to assure a good box office. The musicals obviously have elements which can be exploited by gay producing groups, the most obvious are the inherent ability to exploit transvestism and the involvement of large numbers of people. Other plays such as The Women have these same elements. Of Mice and Men contains latent, although platonic, homosexuality. It is not necessary to change the texts of these plays to enhance their homophile appeal. The context of the production is sufficient to effect certain connotations for the audience. These connotations add significantly to the appeal the play might have for a gay audience.

Original scripts, and their producing organizations, available for this study are: Game of Fools, ONE, Inc.; Pearls Over Shanghai, The Cockettes; The Love Thief, SPREE; and Coming Out!, GAA. These scripts indicate the wide range of interests and purposes reflected in the various homophile organizations. The Play published by ONE is pedantic. The scripts developed for The Cockettes are burlesques in the historical sense of the word. Those written for SPREE are light, almost trivial, comedies. The play which GAA produced is propagandist.

These scripts also seem to refute the characteristic attitudes of the commercial dramas of their time period. Game of Fools, for instance, was published in 1955. It will be recalled that this is the time of strongest homophobia on the commercial stage. Game of Fools strikes at many major homophobic arguments. In the 1960s a cold-blooded utilitarian attitude regarding homosexuality is evinced by heterosexuals in the drama. Contrasted to this, as in plays written for SPREE, homosexuality in Gay Theatre is the subject of lighthearted banter.

From the point of view of the evolution from homophobia to homophilia, Game of Fools and Pearls Over Shanghai hit at established patterns and behaviors of social institutions. The Love Thief treats of homosexuality in a farcical mood, exposing weaknesses to peers. Coming Out! gleans homophobic behavior and attitudes from United States history and points to the surging movement of Gay Pride which has recently manifested itself. Homophilia certainly carries the day in dramas written for Gay Theatre.

ONE, Inc.: Game of Fools

Game of Fools was the first homophilic play to be published by a major homophile organization. In publishing the play, ONE, Inc. was fulfilling a charter obligation, promoting material conducive to the homophile movement. The play was published by ONE because

it is the product of James (Barr) Fugate, who, under the name James Barr, had written Quatrefoil in 1951, "the first wholly serious fictional treatment of the subject [homosexuality] to become an American best seller."² To ONE this meant that the play was written by an author who was regarded early in the movement as a significant homophilic voice. ONE was more than willing to support Fugate's writing in any way it could.

In reading the script, several significant points are raised when one keeps in mind the state of attitudes toward homosexuality in 1955. The play challenges religion and the law. This is a significant step. The major social institutions which are oppressive and phobic toward homosexuality are thus singled out and attacked with the fervor of a propagandist.

The play concerns four young men, Johnnie Babton, Frenchy English, Jasher Pureson, and Paddy O'Reiley. For several years they had been meeting at a secluded cabin to explore and satisfy their homosexual tendencies. On the final night of their meetings, the party is raided. The play deals with their responses to their subsequent trial, incarceration, and adjustment to life after release. It also depicts their various responses to legal, family, and religious homophobias.

Fugate also treats of their individual attitudes towards homosexuality. In the course of the play, Frenchy, Jasher, and Paddy evince elements of homophobia,

but Johnnie is never homophobic. Jasher becomes guilt-ridden because of his homosexuality and the death of his mother while he was in prison. In despair brought on by a minister, he commits suicide. Paddy has to drink in order to erase the guilt of his homosexual liaisons with the others. After the parties are discovered, he allows his mother to take over his life, and after prison he enters a monastery. Frenchy for a brief time renounces homosexuality, but finally he accepts his natural inclinations without guilt. He settles down to a life with Johnnie. Johnnie seems to be embittered by the social oppressions which he and his friends must suffer. For a while he seems to become misanthropic, then he moves to England where he passes into a hedonistic stage. Finally he acknowledges some responsibility to himself and for his fellow homosexuals. He agrees to return to the United States to live with Frenchy and to work for civil rights for homosexuals.

At this time the commercial dramas are depicting homosexual suicides and murders and denouncing the gays' sexual proclivities. Rather than ignore some of the sensationalism of the contemporary drama, Fugate includes some of these elements, yet he manages to construct them so that the play is ultimately homophilic.

This is a very subjective play. Mr. Fugate, in an introductory essay, "Random Thoughts on Religion, Homosexuality and Playwrighting [sic], not necessarily

to be read," writes of the dearth of dramatic and fictional material which presents the homosexual "as an average human being with the same graceless foibles as anyone else."³ So, Game of Fools was written to fill a void: "If I can't find what I want to read on the shelves, then I'll make a stab at writing it myself. Let the professionals satisfy me and I'll shut up."⁴

The play is loaded with extremes of attitudes, and the essay reflects Fugate's bases for presenting these extremes. The prime malefactor against homosexuality, in his view is religion:

It does not take [the homosexual] long to recognize several ultradogmatic sects of organized religion as the "brain" behind those legions of uninformed who refuse to understand his dilemma and who would prefer to see him destroyed to living the useful life of an average citizen.⁵

Fugate's essay also hits heavily on police and political corruption. In his view, the McCarthy hysteria and subsequent profit from blackmailing the homosexual minority was not peculiar to Washington. It was widespread across the nation. "Politicians who ride to power on homosexual 'clean-ups' and corrupt police officials who take bribes from this minority are not rare in this country."⁶

In the play itself, Fugate depicts the judiciary, politicians, and police as corrupt. The original raid was ordered by a political foe of Paddy's father. The Governor of the state refused to release Jasher from

prison a few hours early, even though Jasher's mother was dying. In two separate instances police accept bribes to ignore their warrants and leave the homosexuals alone. A judge who was to have heard the case was willing to give the men "a suspended sentence for the sum of twenty thousand dollars."⁷

Fugate's attitude toward organized religion is primarily expressed in one scene. In this particular scene he depicts the manipulations of two ministers who are counseling the men after their release. The homosexuals must undergo this counseling; it is a part of the conditions of their parole. The two ministers, Canon Eston and Reverend Peneton, are drawn as ineffective advocates of religion.

Canon Eston is counseling with Frenchy. The two had been corresponding while Frenchy was in jail, so the canon is expecting that his job will be relatively simple. Frenchy is bitter about his term in jail, however, and the canon is hard pressed to refute some of Frenchy's attacks on religion. These attacks contain many of the inequities claimed to be suffered by homosexuals at the hands of the church: victimization of inverters, maintenance of ignorance, rule through fear of the unknown. Frenchy also hits at the illogical alliance of the state with the church: lay punishment for ecclesiastical sin; unwillingness of religion to champion legal reform on moral questions; establishment

and punishment of the victimless crime. The canon is reduced to puerile, ineffective observations:

CANON: You do feel you've done wrong, don't you, Francois?

FRENCHY: Yes, I suppose so. But I must tell you that legally I think we have been brutally victimized . . . (Meditating) Perhaps it is the fault of the churches . . . Perhaps that is the reason we were imprisoned . . . the churches that are supposed to lead the people wisely, mercifully . . . but too often . . . grow fat on their power and cannot grow out of the ages of ignorance and superstition that science has left behind . . . yet Religion continues to base its creeds on fear . . . Today the only stronghold of religion is in conventional ignorance and fanaticism . . . Its attitude toward homosexuality is but one more indication of its loss in its fight for survival . . . When the four of us did what we did, Canon, each of us faced the same problem; we were honestly trying to solve it when we did what we did . . . Our premise was simple: a well-adjusted homosexual is preferable in society to the paranoic or schizophrenic . . . If our sins were against God, then why were we compelled to answer to the state for them? . . . And why are female prostitutes, diseased physically and mentally beyond the comprehension of either of us, allowed to go free with only small fines while we had to pay with years and reputations of our lives and our families? Why do the churches fight to preserve such inequities, to keep the laws from changing, Canon?

CANON: . . . The laws will change, when they need to change. I cannot answer your questions for I do not know that they are questions that should be answered . . . After all, my boy, homosexual acts--all sterile acts of pleasure except for the purpose of procreation of course--are sins against God, whatever the laws of the state may be.

FRENCHY: And do you think the homosexual chooses to be homosexual?

CANON: That is not the question. The homosexual cannot be excused because of the weakness of his flesh or the strength of his temptations.

FRENCHY: Men purchase contraceptives; women practice birth control. They are not jailed for

thirteen months for disobeying God's laws! If they answer to God for their sins, then why do they not pay the price imposed upon us?⁸

Fugate paints a very negative picture of the evangelical preacher in the characterization of Reverend Peneton, who is described as "a small, wiry, nervous fanatic of the Scourge-With-God school of evangelism."⁹ Rev. Peneton is acting as the counsel for Johnnie and Jasher, at the request of Jasher's father.

Peneton's first meeting with the two men goes swiftly to the point. One of his first lines is "The Wages of Sin is Death!"¹⁰ From this point he aggressively concentrates on Jasher, and ignores Johnnie and Johnnie's arguments and retorts:

You have committed one of the blackest sins known to God. Because of it, your beloved mother has died. Were you to face the Holy Maker today, your punishment would be an eternity of suffering such as you cannot imagine here on this earth! . . . You must repent your sins, Jasher . . . You may be responsible for your mother's death, Jasher! You may be as surely as if you had taken a knife and killed her!¹¹

Peneton's ranting soon becomes irrational as he equates murder and homosexuality and blames the homosexuals for an impending Divine apocalypse:

This is the beginning of the end, Jasher. The hydrogen bomb is God's warning to his people. This is the beginning of Eternity of Bliss for his Chosen Ones, and of torment for those who have disobeyed His laws. Those who have committed sexual acts of perversion! Of murder!¹²

Fugate also has Peneton working in collusion with Jasher's father in a deliberate attempt to destroy the

boy's ego. Peneton does this because the elder Pureson is a publisher of religious books, and Peneton is an author of religious books that "are not easy to market."¹³

Fugate's single-mindedness toward a relentless attack on organized religion has one final touch. He discloses in the final scene of the play that Peneton is serving twenty years in prison for raping a fourteen-year-old girl in his church.

The two protagonists, Johnnie and Frenchy, present a vivid picture of the two choices available to express the homosexual identity in the early 1950s, activism or passivism. Should a homosexual live his life openly as a homosexual, or should he relegate his propensities to subterfuge, to "the closet?" The question is resolved in favor of activism. Johnnie is a confirmed homosexual throughout the play; Frenchy vacillates for a while, but he, too, finally accepts his homosexuality.

Johnnie accepts the homophobic reactions of society and its social institutions at face value. He utilizes them, and the weaknesses they imply, to his advantage. He readily offers bribes to the arresting officer and the judge hearing his case. He shows no remorse in these actions. Indeed, he defends them because of their common occurrence:

I hadn't corrupted the judge originally. He was selling evasion to anyone who could raise the price, and on a fairly open market. If any racketeer, murderer, thief or panderer could escape the

punishment inflicted by the laws of society of their crimes, I saw no reason why other citizens should not do likewise. Blame the cause, not the result.¹⁴

In prison Johnnie manages to use his father's influence and his own background to acquire a job in the prison library, rather than work in the laundry with the others. His utilitarian attitude presages the same attitudes which will appear in the commercial dramas of the 1960s. Homosexuality and what it implies are tools which can be used for or against a person. Johnnie prefers to have them used for him.

Frenchy, on the other hand, seems to seek out both punishment for, and means to, discard his homosexuality. It is he who first mentions pleading guilty: "I have to . . . I am, unfortunately."¹⁵ He mentions that the night of the arrest was to have been his last homosexual encounter: "It was to be--my last experience that way. The rest of my life . . . I am no longer a homosexual."¹⁶ He goes so far as to plan marriage.

Frenchy is more thoughtful than Johnnie. As noted in the exchange with the canon, Frenchy ruminates about homosexuality and all of its implications and ramifications for himself and for society. His musings finally allow him to see his way clear to embrace a gay life style.

In contrast to the fact that Fugate depicts his antagonists as totally without redeeming values, he does

provide his protagonists with some negative values which enhance their characters. Johnnie and Frenchy both feel the absence of an inner core of meaning to their separate lives. They both realize that at present they are living effete existences. At first Frenchy feels that the "core" for which they are searching is "found only in the heart of a family of one's own."¹⁷ Realizing, though, that the family is not a valid goal for their inherent natures, Frenchy and Johnnie decide that they will live together. They will find their "core" in their mutual struggles in the face of homophobic adversity.

Johnnie and Frenchy constitute a valid homosexual identity. They do not have to worry about many of the social oppressions utilized by homophobes: They are wealthy enough to be able to ignore occupation-financial methods; they have already suffered from the legal-physical oppressions. But what especially makes them worthy of identity emulation is their ability to maintain their individualities. They are both strong-willed enough to withstand attacks on their egos.

The resolution of the play is in the tradition of the wedding of divergent modes. In this instance it is the confluence of attitudes of self-regard. The resulting attitude indicates the homophile movement of the future. The thinker and the doer decide to join forces. They will stay in their hometown in order that they

might combat the various hypocrisies in the institutions of religion and law. In this way Frenchy and Johnnie might be of some help to other homosexuals who might benefit from the results of their efforts.

The purpose of ONE, Inc., is to educate the homosexual and the heterosexual so that homosexuality might integrate into the society. Game of Fools furthers this purpose in two ways. It exposes institutional ills which promote homophobia, and it depicts valid homosexual identity. The church, the family, and the law are criticized; Johnnie and Frenchy are mature, responsible, and respectable men. Game of Fools provides a good, if somewhat pedantic, dramatic vehicle for the philosophies espoused by ONE, Inc.

The Cockettes: Pearls Over Shanghai

The Cockettes' plays contain statements about a multitude of contemporary social ills. Frank Bourquin describes the Cockettes' material as "surrealistic." An example of this surrealism can be found in the script of Pearls Over Shanghai, a three-act musical which burlesques a myriad of social institutions.

The script provides a humorous picture of Shanghai, China, in the mode of the musical extravaganzas produced by Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s. The cast of characters and the plot are classic: The Robin sisters, DeLux, DeLight, and DeLicious, are in Shanghai on a

vacation. Their opening number describes their feeling of adventure and anticipation. This is what is found in all musical extravaganzas' opening numbers. But the last line of Pearls' opening song is unexpected, and it sets the tone of the play:

Arriving in some foreign city,
Afraid and unsure on the docks,
Trying to feel safe and witty,
In a land where perversion knocks.¹⁸

The evil Mother Fu sends her henchmen to "go forth as a simple cliché, find three willing virgins then give them to Chang."¹⁹ Chang, in turn, will deliver the girls to Madame Gin Sling, who will have the girls impregnated. She will then have them sent back to the West to deliver their children. The children of mixed blood will infiltrate and weaken the Western way of life. The purpose behind her insidious plot is the eventual enslavement of the West.

In the meantime, Eddy, the captain of the girls' ship, has two problems. He is determined to save the Robin sisters from a fate worse than death. He has also fallen in love with an oriental street girl, LiLi Frustrata, who sells "apples and wanton." Eddy, however, is reluctant to marry LiLi because "miscegenation isn't legal in America yet. Why, it isn't even done in Shanghai, by nice people, I mean."²⁰

LiLi runs off to The Opium Den Paradise, which is run by Shangrala, Queen of Opium. The Robin sisters

have been brought there as a part of their enslavement.

Eddy's dilemma is solved when the Robin sisters, now opium addicts, decide they like living in Shanghai, and he discovers the circumstances of his birth.

Madame Gin Sling recognizes him as her long lost son, who was tossed onto a garbage truck when she was kidnapped and brought to China.

Eddy now can marry LiLi since he is only half Caucasian. The joyful LiLi immediately delivers Siamese twins, one yellow and one white. At this point Shangrala exclaims, "A show with a Moral!" The ensemble says, "Ahhhhh!"²¹ And the finale begins.

Throughout the play some subtle and some not so subtle negative criticisms are expressed about many elements in our society. Pearls Over Shanghai is critical of many social institutions and values, but those most often spoofed are sexual role playing, American arrogance, and the materialistic American dream.

Socio-sexual role-playing is held up to ridicule by the Cockettes' use of radical drag as well as the depiction of the gamut of female sex-symbol types.

Mother Fu is an elderly lecherous female who sings of cruising for men. Her song includes innuendoes of fellatio, masturbation, and an estrous condition:

I never found a man I could use much,
 Haven't left my throne much,
 But, what a land,
 I wonder what's at hand.

For you see I'm cruising,
 Sometimes I seem to be losing,
 But I never stop woosin',
 Around the world I'm cruising,
 Looking for the man who'll do.

I'm a little number whose cruising, [sic]
 Among the streets I'm choosing,
 Around the town I'm coozing,
 I don't intend to be losing
 That man to do.

Down the avenue, a tour is grand,
 I'll be cruising until I'm banned,
 I'm looking for that helping hand,
 I'm not resting until I stand,
 With that man who'll do.

O yes, I'm cruising,
 The world's a bargain store for choosing.
 Never mind the one's [sic] I'm losing,
 Someday I'll find a man whose choosing to, [sic]
 Could that man be you?²²

Lili Frustrata is an ingenue, but, unlike the innocent-girl-wronged in most cinematic examples, Lili has an unusual sexual history:

Once, I, a maiden in paradise
 A virgin celestial and true.
 I teach each flower how to dance,
 Now they wilt while my temple turns blue.

Once I was kicked out of paradise,
 For with dragons, I did screw.
 Heavens surround, but I no see,
 I walked condemned yet immortal too.²³

Masculine roles are also burlesqued in this play.

Most of the American sailors and the Chinese men are depicted as randy. Eddie responds to the Robin sisters' dilemma as would any young American stereotype: He

wants to save them from a "fate worse than death, for they are unsoiled."²⁴ He is even prepared to commit hara-kiri if he cannot effect their release: "I would perish if they performed for your low clientele. Their shame would be my own, for a life without pride is no life at all."²⁵ But Eddy exhibits moral turpitude in his relationship with LiLi. He is willing to have her be his concubine, but he is unwilling to marry her.

American arrogance and values are ridiculed in the characterization of the Robin sisters. They threaten Madame Gin Sling with American retribution because she plans to desecrate what Americans hold dear:

DELIGHT: How dare you talk Jazibel?! You, a painted whore and us Americans with B.A.'s. Our passports could never permit perverts to force our virginity!

DELUX: Unhand us, bitch, someday we may marry and then you'll find out that Uncle Sam won't let a mother lay disgraced!²⁶

Finally, though, the American girls are won over to the life of sin and depravity to which they have been exposed. They refuse to leave the opium den. They like it there. They reject American values:

Don't try to push us 'cause we're havin' fun
Don't try to make us 'cause we won't run
We're saying Fu to you

The trains are leaving but we won't go
Our ship is sailing off and we know
We're saying Fu to you

Good-bye to Broadway and Good-bye to cares
The modern world with all its Frigidares [sic]
Has shipped beyond our view

The teeming masses of the Orient
Are lending me their Asiatic scent
We've changed, our address is new

Please tell the postman not to forward mail
Tell the neighbors that we've gone to jail
From jail there's never news

Don't try to push us 'cause we're havin' fun
Don't try to make us, 'cause we won't run
We're saying' Fu to you.²⁷

The finale touches on a myriad of social evils:

politicians, bombs, chaos, loss of personal liberties,
loss of honor, shortages of food, war. The lyrics
also call for individuals to take action on their own
to enjoy life before it is too late. Finally, the
closing number praises Shanghai, to which it ascribes
the character of a state of mind or a physical exis-
tence without the restrictions imposed by a bankrupt
society. The finale of Pearls Over Shanghai is a very
anti-establishment song:

The Modern world is an evil place,
Full of terror, full of hate,
With paranoia, with much waste,
So don't lie with foolish eyes,
Get your head out of the sky,
Make haste to live!

The Modern world's an evil mate,
Empty people, commonplace,
Without honor, dreams of paste,
While here we stand with wounded eyes,
Tiny people beneath the sky,
Make haste to live!

The world is crashing down around us,
Catastrophe is beginning to surround us,
War crys rising, also pricing,
Good times flying, peasants dying.

Chaos all we're seeing, while sanity is fleeting,
Hope is stopped breathing, while freedom is leaving,
Food is growing scarcer, beauty growing lesser,
Make haste! Make haste and live!!

Shanghai, where they dine on your moral attitude.
Shanghai, the hottest town of any latitude.
Shanghai, you'll be beggin' and borrowin'
Shanghai, you'll be shcemein' and cheating' [sic]
Shanghai, you'll be ravin' and beatin'
For one more hour in good old Shanghai!!!²⁸

Pearls Over Shanghi very effectively makes several points for The Cockettes. It is a play burlesquing many social institutions, and it denigrates established American sexual role playing.

SPREE: The Love Thief

SPREE's penchant for wit and nudity is exemplified by the October, 1971, production of The Love Thief--a Gay Sex Comedy For Adulterers Only, written by Kelle.²⁹

The plot is simple: A thief burglarizing the apartment of two quarreling lovers is trapped and discovered by one of the lovers, Herby. Herby thinks the thief is Cousin Adam, who is due for a visit that next day. Herby is in the process of seducing the thief when his lover, Dennis, comes home. Herby hides and Dennis meets the thief. Again, the thief successfully pretends to be Cousin Adam, and he has to fend off Dennis' seductive overtures. The thief manages to turn the lights off, and, under the cover of darkness, he manages to make his escape, obviously planning to rob an orgy across town. The invitation to the orgy is the only

item he manages to steal in this apartment. Dennis and Herby are reconciled. Dennis is carried off to the bedroom wondering if the orgy's host has theft insurance.

The script is replete with "in" references to various homosexual topics and fantasies: Promiscuity; flavored lubricants, "for people who change their minds;" lover relationships. There are plays on famous names which are somehow linked either to homosexuality or sexuality in general. "Rock Hunter" is an obvious reference to Rock Hudson and Tab Hunter. "Howard Hefner" refers to Howard Hughes and Hugh Hefner. There is also a bit about an alleged relationship between Rock Hudson and Jim Nabors, "Rock Hunter gave [an invitation to an orgy] to me as a tip last night. He can't go because he has a date with 'neighbors.'"³⁰

Numerous sexual double entendres fairly tumble over each other in the script. In the following passage references are made to attractive bed partners, sexual equipment, the erection, the orgasm, sexual intercourse, and multiple sex partners:

HERBY: You should see some of the souvenirs he keeps in the bedroom. (Openly cruising thief) Of course, I've had several nice pieces in there, too. I think it's time for us to go to bed. You must be tired from the trip, and since I'm getting up . . . so early . . .

THIEF: I shouldn't think of keeping you up all night. Please go on to bed and I'll read and wait for Dennis to come.

HERBY: Believe me, that can be a longer wait than anyone would expect. No, I insist we do it now. I'll be very sleepy tomorrow, if I don't get a little tonight.

THIEF: Then I must insist on sleeping here on the couch. Whenever I'm in strange apartments, I like to be as close to the door as possible.

HERBY: That couch isn't very comfortable. Besides we have an extra large bed in the bedroom. It can take three guys at once. It's Queen size.³¹

There follows a nude scene of seduction. The thief's desire to escape is heightened when Herby attempts anal intercourse. "You're a master of French tradition . . . But it's Greek for me . . . You'd better relax those muscles or this may hurt you more than it hurts me."³²

The Love Thief features three nude males in risqué situations. This not to indicate that the SPREE productions are pornographic. Quite to the contrary. Pat Rocco is very much aware of his reputation as a film producer, and he keeps a very close watch on the stage shows in order to prevent sexual excesses from being presented. One play, The French Lesson, has a scene depicting bobbing heads, simulating mutual fellatio. Even though the actors were partially hidden by a couch, Mr. Rocco exercised censorship, and the scene was cut. Rocco also censors certain words and phrases, such as fuck, suck and motherfuck.³³

Dramatic presentations at SPREE are designed to entertain and titillate. The organization's original

scripts accomplish this end by being risqué and by featuring nudity.

Gay Activists Alliance: Coming Out!

Jonathan Katz is a homosexual, member of GAA, historian by avocation, and playwright by way of all three. He also has a talent for ferreting out historical details which can make the transition from historical account to dramatic presentation. And Coming Out! is "a documentary play about gay life and liberation in the U.S.A."³⁴

Coming Out! is a two-act play with twenty-one scenes. Twenty of the scenes are gleaned from American history. Katz uses the writings of such men as Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony, Rev. John Rayner of Massachusetts Bay Colony, Walt Whitman, Gertrude Stein, and Katz' contemporaries who have found strength in the surge of Gay Pride stemming from the aftermath of Stonewall. The contemporary and historical realities are the play's most significant strengths, according to David Roggensack, the director:

The power of the play is the fact that it is historical. Everything in it is taken from historical documents. Gay people need to know the accomplishments of gay people in America.³⁵

United States history contains many covert and overt references to homosexuality. The point made consistently and repetitively in the play is that the history of the nation has many accounts of the persecution of the homosexual.

Accounts of physical-legal oppression of homosexuality in the United States dates at least from 1642. In that year Governor Bradford of Phymouth Colony wrote of the surprising ineffectiveness of harsh punishment in dealing with offenses of the flesh:

Marvelous it may be
to see and consider
how wickedness
did grow and break forth here,
in a land where wickedness
was so much witnessed against
and severely punished,
as in no place more--
insomuch
that we have been somewhat censured
even by moderate and good men
for our severity in punishments.
And yet all this
could not suppress
the breaking out,
this year, besides others,
of sundry notorious sins,
especially drunkenness and uncleanness.
Not only incontinency
between persons unmarried,
but some married persons also.
But that which is worse,
even sodomy and buggery
(things fearful to name)
have broke forth in this land
oftener than once.³⁶

That same year, 1642, Rev. John Rayner wrote that acts of a homosexual nature, even masturbation of another, were punishable by death:

In the Biblical law
it is manifest
that carnal knowledge of man
or lying with man
as with woman,
cum penetratio corporis,
was sodomy,
to be punished with death.
. . . though there was not
penetratio corporis

but only contactus
and fricatio usque ad effusionem seminis
that this foul sin
might be capital.³⁷

The corrupt police depicted in Game of Fools are not a recent phenomena to the American homosexual, according to Coming Out!. Lincoln Steffens wrote of a story of a police raid "on a result of fairies." The raid occurred because of "a failure of some one to come through with the regular bit of blackmail."³⁸

History also contains positive expressions of homosexuality. A German immigrant in the early 1870s wrote of the homosexual subculture in America:

. . . I went to North America,
to try my fortune.
There the unnatural vice in question
is more ordinary than it is here;
and I was able to indulge my passions
with less fear
of punishment or persecution.
The American's tastes in this matter
resemble my own;
and I discovered,
in the United States,
that I was always immediately recognized
as a member of the confraternity.³⁹

In establishing an historical basis for a valid homosexual identity, Coming Out! reminds of cultural contributions by homosexuals to the American way of life. The play contains homosexual writings of Walt Whitman, Gertrude Stein, and Willa Cather. It also notes that Horatio Alger's rise in business began after he was dismissed from his Unitarian ministry because of pederasty. A report from a Committee of the

Unitarian Church, Brewster, Massachusetts, reads:

Horatio Alger
who has officiated as our Minister
for about 15 months past
has recently been charged
with gross immorality
and a most heinous crime,
a crime of no less magnitude
than the abominable
and revolting crime
of unnatural familiarity with boys.
The committee sent for Alger
and to him specified
the charges and evidence
of his guilt
which he neither denied
or attempted to extenuate
but received it
with apparent calmness
of an old offender---
and hastily left town
on the very next train
for parts unknown.⁴⁰

The final scene of the play brings the homosexual's moment in history to the present. It is a mixture of written accounts, recollections, and creative writing depicting the 1970 and 1971 Gay Pride Week marches and Gay-Ins in New York City. Coming Out! recounts the mood of the marchers, and some of the reactions of spectators. Most of all, the scene reads like a litany of homosexual oppressions, interspersed with proclamations of a changing world and a changing attitude within the homosexual. The emerging valid homosexual identity is quite apparent in the final scene of Coming Out!:

FEMALE :

Today, together,
we have walked with joy
under a blue sky and a yellow sun.
For too long in the past
we were night creatures,

sons of darkness,
daughters of shadows,
fearful of light.
For too long we were strangers in this land,
queer people,
fugitives,
condemned to solitary,
isolated,
exiled,
outlawed,
mocked,
pittied, [sic]
denied,
your bastard children
consigned to oblivion.

FEMALE:

For too long,
without protest or resistance
we accepted it as natural
that your politicians
legislate us criminals,
your police
jail us for our outlawed acts,
your psychiatrists
deny our love legitimacy,
your preachers
condemn us for our sin,
your armies
discharge us with dishonor
(we are not good enough
to maim and kill for freedom),
your employers
fire us,
your bullies beat us,
your gangs rape and murder us,
your mothers and fathers
disown us,
your comedians mock us.
For too long
we accepted all this as deserved,
and natural.

MALE:

In the streets
we eyed each other furtively,
with lust only,
without friendliness.
In the streets
we sniffed
and circled round each other
warily,

waiting.

We met and mated
like dogs in heat.
We bargained for a little contact.
We settled for these brief encounters,
contracted in contempt.
At night
in the darkness of the parks
we gave our bodies
more easily than our names,
we offered ourselves anonymously,
like slaves on the auction block,
like traders on the market place.

MALE:

With vulture eyes
we looked upon each other hungrily
as meat.
Vampires,
denied our own identity,
desperately
we tried to suck our lives
from one another.
With calculating glance,
with cashier's hearts,
we toted every score,
accounted every number,
had our little tricks.
Street vendors,
we peddled our own flesh,
and sold ourselves too cheap.

FEMALE:

In the past
we thought it somehow made us into men
when we loved another woman.
Now, in our struggle,
we have taught ourselves
it is good
to be women loving women.
Now, as we affirm
that we are women who love women,
for the first time
we see clearly
our double faced oppression,
as women
and as lesbians.
Now we know
to have our freedom
all sisters must be free.

FEMALE:

For too long we have been your laughing stock
For too long we laughed with you.
For so long,
for so many of us,
there was something truly unspeakable
about ourselves,
a deep and secret shame.
We wore the mask.
Well, the masks are coming off,
your "freaks"
are coming out fighting
to face you
in all our "unnatural" beauty.
Like those proud blacks
with their bushy naturals,
we "unnaturals"
are together coming out
to fiercely assert,
and joyfully celebrate
our natures,
fully, openly,
without shame.

MALE:

Our past shame,
we are at last learning,
did not come out of the blue.
It was your contempt
which we accepted,
internalized,
and made very much our own.
When we have finally realized
that the depth of contempt
in which we have held ourselves
was preceded by,
and is a true measure
of the depth of hate
in which you hold us,
our anger will be uncheckable,
our actions against you
will burn with rage.
So,
in the words of a new found comrade,
"Watch your step, honey!"

FEMALE:

In the past
we came to you
quietly,
with the proper air of deference,
begging for acceptance,

toleration,
and a little sympathy.
Well you have missed your chance!
We no longer need your sympathy.
There'll be no more begging,
no more hat in hand.
The step an' fetch it gays
have had their day.

MALE:

We who were invisible
now are walking in the streets
hand in hand,
smiling at each other openly.
At long last,
in public,
proudly,
we dare to speak our name.
No, not speak, shout!
We have been silenced
for too long.

MALE:

Together we will shout and scream and fight

FEMALE:

until we have our rights,

MALE:

until gay people are free,

FEMALE:

until this society is changed.⁴¹

GAA has found Coming Out! to be an excellent dramatic vehicle to jolt homosexuals from their mental and physical "closets." The material works very well as agit-prop theatre. It hits hard on the injustices inflicted on the sexual minority. It emphasizes the bravery necessary for an individual to demand his inherent national rights. It establishes a valid identity. It challenges society to make changes.

These plays are examples of how homophilia can be fostered through the drama. Each one of them depicts

some negative aspect of social attitudes which inhibits homosexuality. These negative attitudes are exposed via creative dialogue, as in Game of Fools; burlesque, as in Pearls Over Shanghai and The Love Thief; or historical dramatization, as in Coming Out! In each case the focus of attention on the fault enables the gay audience to see more clearly the nature of the danger to them.

The scripts written for a specific homosexual organization have offered a range of characterizations. They do not portray homosexuals as being without faults. Just as there are heterosexual villains in heterosexual plays, these plays contain some homosexual characters of dubious honor. One of two characters, especially in the early Game of Fools, are homophobic. Where these characters do exist, they are countered by homophilic gays or by gays of admirable qualities.

In the final analysis, the plays of this nature stress either a gay pride or a homophilic independence of thought. These elements were lacking in commercial theatre's treatment of homosexuals for a long while.

These specially written dramatic refutations of the social pressures on the homosexual which induce self-hatred are great steps forward in the establishment of a valid identity for the homosexual.

Notes

¹The precise number of original scripts which originated at SPREE and with The Cockettes is unknown.

²Letter from W. Dorr Legg, August 2, 1973. In support of this claim, Legg adds, "Well of Loneliness was something apart, in many ways."

³James (Barr) Fugate, Game of Fools (Los Angeles; ONE, Inc., 1955), p. x.

⁴Ibid., p. xii.

⁵Ibid., p. vii.

⁶Ibid., p. xii.

⁷Ibid., p. 45.

⁸Ibid., pp. 75-79.

⁹Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 75.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 75-81.

¹²Ibid., p. 83.

¹³Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁸Cockettes, Pearls Over Shanghai, unpublished manuscript, p. 1. (typewritten, Xeroxed)

¹⁹Ibid., p. 4.

²⁰Ibid., p. 29.

²¹Ibid., p. 34.

²²Ibid., pp. 8-9.

²³Ibid., p. 6.

²⁴Ibid., p. 18.

²⁵Ibid., p. 19.

²⁶Ibid., p. 25.

²⁷Ibid., p. 33.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 34-35.

²⁹Pseudonym. A copy of The Love Thief is included, with the author's permission, as an appendix to this dissertation.

³⁰Kelle, The Love Thief, unpublished manuscript, p. 1. (typewritten)

³¹ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

³² Ibid., p. 4.

³³ Lucas and Rust interviews.

³⁴ Jonathan Katz, Coming Out!, unpublished manuscript, copyright, 1972, version performed September, 1972, p. i.

³⁵ Roggensack interview.

³⁶ Katz, p. 11.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 56-81.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY

The cliché is that theatre is a reflection of its particular society. Given this, it is clear that social attitudes towards homosexuality have changed considerably over the past twenty years in light of the attitude toward homosexuality as presented in American drama.

In 1952 the American society had stated policies which indicated homophobia. The McCarthy hearings were just a couple of years away, and Eisenhower's Executive Order 10450 was signed in April, 1953. The homosexual responded to this phobia by closeting himself away from the resulting social suppressions. He gave in at least that much to ego-destruction.

Since that time homophobia has been on the wane and homophilia has been waxing. To be sure, the general public is not ready to accept homosexuality as a viable alternative way of life, but neither are they insisting on purges of the homosexual community.

The change in homophobic attitudes can be traced in the American drama since 1952. The plays of 1953 were strongly homophobic. Since that time we can

delineate a development of homophilic attitudes in the drama. By 1972, in Williams' Small Craft Warnings, not a single heterosexual is inherently homophobic. They perhaps reflect some vestiges of homophobic thought, but this is more rhetoric than conviction.

This change in attitude implies an ongoing dramatic presentation of homophilia. There has not been an American homophobe, either heterosexual or homosexual, in recent dramatic history. None are implied for the future.

Homophile organizations have made their mark in this change in social attitude. Using the legal means available, early gay groups sought to remove some of the legal oppressions used against homosexuals. Early successful court battles, for the right to use the United States mails to distribute homophilic literature, for example, have led to challenges on other laws which discriminate against homosexuality. Later successes are indicated by a significant change in sex laws in several states. Eight states now have no laws restricting sexual activity between consenting adults. In several other states the homosexual act has been reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor. Similar bills relaxing legal restrictions on sex acts are pending in California and Washington, D.C.

Other homosexual groups have sought social change through more subtle means. They began to establish a

valid homosexual identity on the theory that people who had pride in themselves would not tolerate social pressures against them. Early in the movement it was obvious to many leaders that the homosexual at large was suffering from the ego-destructive suppressions employed against him. The leaders of these groups determined that it would be necessary to build a valid identity for the homosexual community if that community were to be able to demand its civil rights. Some organizations were dedicated to this development. Lectures, social events, talk groups, and publications followed. The virtues of homosexuality as a life style were extolled.

Some of these organizations have turned to the drama as a tool for their work. The presentation of dramas has been used to promote the valid homosexual identity, to refute homophobic motives, to provide entertainment for the membership, and to raise funds for the organization.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Gay Theatre was generally limited to afternoons and evenings of entertainments at business meetings. The material most often presented was poetry or dramatic readings.

As the general morality of the nation changed in the mid-1960s, the homophile organizations became more daring in their own dramatic productions. At first royalty plays were performed with men taking women's

roles. Eventually original scripts emerged from the membership, and they were given production. These scripts often feature male nudity. They are specifically designed to entertain the homosexual audience.

At the present time American dramatic activity is alive with Gay Theatre. Homosexual groups are presenting all sorts of theatricals from extravagant musical comedies to brief nude skits. The audiences at Gay Theatre are predominately homosexual, but not because the heterosexual has been intentionally excluded. Gay Theatre is open to anyone who wishes to attend.

In the membership of Gay Theatre, there is a burgeoning feeling of discontent with the present material. Some of the directors, writers, and actors want to present material indicative of their own homophilic attitudes. At present, they are meeting with some resistance. There is a conservative feeling that Gay Theatre ought to consist of good looking men and nudity. But the men who are basically responsible for the productions are beginning to insert "messages" into their presentations regardless of possible negative criticism. However, they chafe at having to be surreptitious at this. The conservative viewpoint is going to have to be broadened if the quality of production is not to fall.

The role of contemporary drama in the development of a valid identity for the homosexual can be inferred

from evidence found in scripts prepared for the commercial stage as well as for Gay Theatre.

As early as 1953, in The Immoralist, a homosexual character was presented who had an identity and self-concept which was homophilic. Unfortunately, this characterization disappeared from commercial American plays for a decade. When it did return, in 1964 (The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window), it was never again replaced by a homophobic homosexual. In the intervening years homosexual characters were either weak in the face of homophobia, resorted to drugs or alcohol, suicidal, or homophobic in some other way. This is no longer the case. Since 1964 the trend in commercial theatre has been to present homophilic homosexuals.

In Gay Theatre one of the first plays published, Game of Fools, was stridently homophilic. It has a very limited production, and its influence was almost negligible. In later subjective scripts the homosexual is depicted with his humanity intact, and his homosexuality is taken for granted rather than emphasized or defended. There is less need for stridency in the present social conditions.

To the individual gay participating in Gay Theatre, drama has been helpful in developing a valid identity.

Tom Rust views Gay Theatre as a prideful expression to be shared with the heterosexuel community:

What I would like to see is an all-homosexual group doing homosexual plays that are not necessarily problem plays. I feel there's a desperate need for that. I want to open it up more to the heterosexual world, and say, "Look, this is what we can do. We're a homosexual group, and this is what we can do." I'm gay and I'm proud. This is what we can do: a gay director has put this together, a gay cast has put this together, a gay writer has written this.

To David Roggensack dramatic expression has been elemental in formulating a responsible attitude toward life:

Homosexuality [as such] is not my *raison d'être* any more, and it used to be. But now gay people are finally getting their heads together and themselves together. We are finally taking our lives into our own hands. Stereotypes will begin to break down.

For Ralph Lucas Gay Theatre has constituted a veritable rebirth:

I was interested in gay civil rights, and I was interested in theatre. Two things I really like very much. Maybe I wasn't very good at theatre [earlier in my life] because I really couldn't say what I wanted to say in straight theatre. You couldn't do all the things you wanted to do. And so now I could really say what was so close to me. So close to what I believe in.

It's complicated because you're dealing with not only theatre, but the psychological aspects of a group that's just beginning to become aware of themselves. It's altered my life. Being in theatre is like dropping a pebble in a pond. It has great effects on your life throughout. Some of my writing and acting have been a great help to me because I've become aware that I am a person. You have to have some kind of work and job that makes you aware. I've just got a tacky little office job. Now I'm an entity. I'm Ralph Lucas who does gay theatre. Doing gay theatre and gay plays gives a legitimacy to your life style. You are coalesced into a human being.

You're not just a guy who goes around to the bars and has some kind of vague life style like . . . Well, when I was just going around to the bars and wasn't in any gay group, I was a cocksucker. Now I'm a homosexual, a gay person. I'm in gay theatre with gay groups. We have a whole identity. A whole life. I think it's helped me to realize that. And I think that's what gay theatre should be. We're human beings with lives outside the bar. We are just like other people.

It is clear that American drama is playing a significant role in the changing social attitudes toward homosexuality, within the ranks of the general public and within the ranks of the homosexual.

APPENDIX

The Love Thief A Gay Sex Comedy for Adulterers Only

By Kelle^a

(Curtain opens on living room of Herbert and Dennis' modest apartment. The room is dark (BLUELIGHT ONLY) and empty. A noise of a lock being forced is heard in the center hallway USC then a flashlight beam is seen as a young thief enters and shines it slowly around the room. The beam shines into the audience at times, as they are viewing through a wall. A divan is angled with its back to this wall DR, and an overstuffed chair is angled similarly DS next to a telephone table. A piano (UR), desk, chair and lamp (URC), TV and phone (ULC) complete the furnishings and an exit to the bathroom is DL. The thief beams onto a nude painting over the desk, on to the piano and then a quick return to the painting. He then moves into the hallway and off into the unseen bedroom. (PAUSE) He comes back in and points beam back onto the painting. He puts several items from desk into bag he carries, then starts to remove the nude painting when a noise of a key in the front door is heard. Thief grabs bag and comes DR and hides behind divan.)

DENNIS: Herby? (He appears in hallway door and reaches in to turn on lamp) Herby? (Moves to bedroom door) Herby, are you home? (He returns to living room and goes to empty vase on end table of divan DR. Sticks hand into vase cautiously then rams entire arm inside as the phone rings and startles him.) Aaahhh!! (He crosses to phone with vase stuck on his right arm . . . Second ring . . . He hesitates, crosses his fingers, looks to heaven, and picks up phone.) Hello! Pizza Man-- We deliver! . . . Oh, Virgie. Thank God, it's you! Yes, this is Dennis. I was just playing 'wrong number' in case it was Herby . . . Yes, the fight is still on. We haven't had sex in three weeks, and if you'll pardon the expression, 'The end is not in sight.' . . . I know it's inhuman to hold out on him, but I

^aCopied from typewritten manuscript provided by Kelle. Stage directions included.

can't forget those strawberry stains in his jockey shorts . . . Yes, strawberry! You know those new fruit-flavored lubricants for people who change their minds. He still won't tell me what queen was playing Avon lady with him at that party. But I'm not 'Ringing his chimes' again until he does . . . Well of course I'm suffering too! I'm crawling the walls! (He looks at vase stuck on his arm) Hold on a minute, will ya? I've just got to get this thing off. (Puts down phone, pulls off vase, picks up phone again) Okay, I'm back . . . What? . . . Virgie, I had a vase stuck on my wrist and it was cutting off my circulation . . . What little I have left. Really, I'm not that desperate . . . Well, maybe I am. You won't believe where I'm going tonight. I have an invitation to a Howard Hefner orgy . . . Rock Hunter gave it to me as a tip last night. He can't go because he has a date with 'neighbors.' Anyway, I told Herby I had to work late, but I forgot the invitation I hid in a vase . . . Sure it's cheating--but there won't be any strawberry stains this time. See Herby will be asleep by the time I get in, and as I'm still sleeping on the couch, I won't even waken him . . . Yeah, the perfect crime. And my last chance for revenge. It's back to bed together tomorrow night . . . No just sleeping in the same bed. The divan is reserved for my long, lost cousin Adam from Hawaii. Mother gave him my address while vacationing there this summer, so I'm stuck with cousin Adam on his reciprocal visit to Hollywood . . . Stop panting, Virgie. He's originally from my hometown in Oklahoma--and he's strictly short, fat, and ugly--at least he was when we used to raise hell in the barn. I still remember his sharp buck teeth. Of course, we were only 12 or 13 at the time. So you can imagine how long ago that was. Anyway, he's flying in tomorrow morning some time and . . . Shhh! (Noise at front door) Well, now you've done it! I think Herby's caught me. Call you tomorrow. (Puts down phone, crosses to turn out lamp on desk and returns to hide behind divan . . . The thief freezes in fear, but Dennis is facing the left end of divan and doesn't see him) Damn telephone queens!

(Herby enters from hall UC and turns on lamp. He is a handsome young man in a suit and tie, and carries a bouquet of flowers wrapped in tissue paper, which he leaves on the desk as he takes off his coat and hangs it on back of desk chair. As soon as he turns his back to take off his coat, Dennis quietly crosses to behind chair DL. Herby moves down and picks up vase, taking it into the bathroom. As he picks it up the invitation falls into chair unnoticed. Dennis reaches right hand

around chair feeling for the missing vase. Herby returns vase to table and crosses up to unwrap the flowers. Dennis reaches for vase again and sticks hand into vase full of water. Withdrawing hand slowly in silent repulsion. Herby brings flowers down to vase and arranges them quickly, then exits DL into bathroom taking his coat on route. Dennis now crosses quietly to UC and exits through front door. Thief follows him but returns to divan for bag and as he gets to hallway he is frozen by Herby.)

HERBY: (Entering from bathroom) Who the Hell are you?

THIEF: (Turning around) OH! You startled me! . . . you must be cousin Dennis' roommate Herby. The door was unlocked and I . . . uh . . . I'm Adam.

HERBY: Oh, you're the cousin from Hawaii. We didn't expect you until tomorrow.

THIEF: I thought I'd surprise Cousin Dennis by taking an earlier plane.

HERBY: Sorry if I startled you. I was in the bathroom and didn't hear you.

THIEF: (Still uncertain) Uhh . . . Where is he?

HERBY: (Staring lustily at thief's body) Where's who?

THIEF: Cousin Dennis.

HERBY: (Out of stare) Oh! . . . Uh . . . He had to work late tonight.

THIEF: Oh. Well, I'm sorry I missed him. (Slowly backing to hall) Tell him that I'll call him in the morning from the hotel.

HERBY: (Very firmly) Wait a minute! Don't think you're going to get away with that! (Crosses up to thief) Now give me that bag . . . (Takes hold of handle).

THIEF: (Frozen in fear, also keeps hand on handle)
But . . .

HERBY: . . . and come on in. Denny would kill me if I let you go to a hotel. (Pulls bag, which crashes to floor) Say! What have you got in there?

THIEF: That's my traveling bag. I travel a lot, and I always try to pick up a few souvenirs here and . . . there. And a few personal things I needed.

HERBY: Well you certainly don't travel light . . . I guess that must run in your family. Denny is quite a collector too.

THIEF: That's nice. Well, I'm sure I must have several pieces in the bag that would interest him. (He has placed bag next to desk)

HERBY: You should see some of the souvenirs he keeps in the bedroom. (Openly cruising thief) Of course, I've had several nice pieces in there too. I think it's time for us to go to bed. You must be tired from the trip, and since I'm getting up . . . so early . . .

THIEF: (Crosses to above divan) I wouldn't think of keeping you up all night. Please go on to bed and I'll read and wait for Dennis to come.

HERBY: Believe me, that can be a longer wait than anyone would expect. No, I insist we do it now. I'll be very sleepy tomorrow, if I don't get a little to-night. (Moves down to thief on line)

THIEF: Then I must insist on sleeping here on the divan. Whenever I'm in strange apartments, I like to be as close to the door as possible. (Sits on arm)

HERBY: That divan isn't very comfortable. Besides we have an extra large bed in the bedroom. It can take three guys at once. It's Queen size.

THIEF: It's nice of you to want to share your big one. But I think the divan would be better for me right now. I wouldn't want to be in his bed if Dennis happened to come home early. I mean I don't know how he'd react.

HERBY: I do. And I think you're right. (Serious concern on line then smile) Yes, it might be better to use the divan. Here. Let me help you undress. (He removes thief's shirt, and shoes, and finally the slacks)

THIEF: (Forces smile and looks around for possible escape. As Herby removes his shorts and slowly looks up into his eyes, he speaks) I think I'll need a pillow . . . (As Herby smiles) . . . and a sheet or blanket if you have them.

HERBY: I don't think you'll need a pillow . . . but I'll get one just in case, and all the other necessary supplies. Then I'll be right back to tuck you in. (He slaps thief playfully on the rear and happily goes UC and into bedroom.)

THIEF: (Stands still until Herby is out of sight, then quickly tries to put on shorts . . . unsuccessfully . . . throws them on back of divan, hops into his pants, and rushes out door. A pause, then he rushes back in and picks up bag by desk. As he turns to hallway he is blocked by Herby entering from bedroom with pillow and sheet) Ohh! Uh . . . Where's the bathroom?

HERBY: (Smiles) Right in there. (Points to DL, then makes bed on divan.)

THIEF: (To explain why he is clutching bag over his stomach) Pajamas! (exits)

HERBY: Hawaiian pajamas? . . . Well I hope they're made of grass. (He goes to phono and puts on music. Hawaiian . . . Back down to table by divan to place a towel and jar of lubricant . . . Then UC to lock several latches on front door. He then turns off lamp and removes all his own clothes . . . crosses down to bathroom door and knocks) Hey, what are you doing in there? Or should I ask?

THIEF: (Coming out of bathroom and turning off light) I was just admiring the view from your bathroom window. Of course it would be much clearer if it weren't for those iron bars on it. (He passes by Herby to CS)

HERBY: Oh, the manager put those on last week after we were robbed. I told him he was dumb to lock the barn door after the horse had already gotten out!

THIEF: I wouldn't exactly say that. Some horses always come in late.

HERBY: (Comes up behind thief and puts arms around his waist groping) And speaking of horses. Hey, where are those pajamas?

THIEF: (Putting arms back and touching Herby's body) Where are yours? (Pulls L)

HERBY: (Laughing) No one wears pajamas in Hollywood. It's a time honored tradition. (Softly) Here. Let me show you why. (Pulls him into a bare chested embrace . . . then caressing back gently with hands and slight nibbling on ear)

THIEF: (Lightly protesting) Hey. (Upon ear nibbling) Heeeeyyy. (Ecstatic)

HERBY: (Leaning backwards his head and shoulders to look thief directly in eye) Now what's it going to be? Cold cotton cloth, or some smooth warm skin?

THIEF: In Hawaii we always try to honor the old traditions. (Returns embrace)

HERBY: (After a tender kiss) Let me show you a few that were passed down from the Greeks . . . (Hands caress thief's rear, then unbutton his pants) . . . and Romans.

THIEF: (Opens belt and steps out of pants) When in Rome! (They kiss again)

HERBY: (Hands massaging now nude rear) Talk about souvenirs . . . You know, I've always wanted a beautiful Hawaiian lei! (Picks up thief and places on divan)

(Muffled moans and movement of Herby and thief in divan increase in intensity and the Hawaiian music (Hawaiian War Chant) increases in volume with them. First Herby, then the thief work their bodies to L end of divan and table. Their heads and chests should be visible from audience for most of following.)

HERBY: (Picking up jar of lubricant and towel from end table) I must admit that you're a master of French tradition . . . But it's Greek for me. (Turns the thief over, on his stomach and straddles him . . . still in a sitting position)

THIEF: (Pinned under Herby, turns head up to face him) Hey, wait a minute, now. Let's not carry tradition too far!

HERBY: (Firmly determined) Come on now! It's been three weeks for me.

THIEF: (Mildly struggling) I feel for you. But it's been 30 years for me.

HERBY: (Hands on hips) 30 years?! Say are you from Hawaii, or the Virgin Islands? (Bends over and gives a kiss on the ear) You'd better relax those muscles or this may hurt you more than it hurts me.

(There is a click of a key in the front door followed by noise of door and restraining latches holding it closed . . . several increasingly loud knocks.

DENNIS: (Muffled voice) Herby! . . . Herby!!

HERBY: (Sits up quickly) Oh, my God. It's Dennis.

THIEF: Saved by the bride!

HERBY: (Stands up looking terrified) Last time it was strawberry stains, but if he catches us . . . this time it'll be blood stains.

DENNIS: (Bangs on door, and now muffled yell) Herby, Open this damn door!!

THIEF: (Stands up takes Herby by shoulders) Don't panic. I've got an idea.

HERBY: (Looks at door) It'd better be a good one. That man is mad.

THIEF: You hide in the bathroom, lock the door just in case, and I'll try to get him to go to the airport for my luggage. Turn on the shower and don't come out until I knock three times on the door. Understand?

HERBY (Picking up his clothes and shakes his head) It's not going to work . . . but at least I'll be nearer to the razor blades.

THIEF: Trust me. I've got a lot to lose, too.

HERBY: You've got guts. But you don't know your cousin very well. (Exits DL)

THIEF: I certainly don't . . . And I hope to Hell he doesn't know his cousin very well either. (Looks toward door, trying to think)

DENNIS: (Muffled yell) If you don't unlatch this door I'll call the manager, Herby! I'll call the cops! . . . I'll call Mother!! (More beating on door)

THIEF: The cops? (Grabs towel and starts putting it around waist.) This has got to work. I need another bust like Raquel Welch needs another bust. (He sees vase . . . goes to it and removes flowers. Sprinkles water from stems over face and body . . . reacting as if the water is cold)

DENNIS: (Muffled but loudest yet) Herby!!!

THIEF: (Panics at scream at door) Coming!! (Braces himself and dumps all the water in the vase over head and body. Puts flowers in vase and goes to door)

DENNIS: I'm counting to ten, Herby. 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . (Noise of latches) 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . 9 . . . 9, Herby! . . . (Door opens Dennis' voice is clear) 10!! (He pushes by thief and into living room) Okay, Herby, this is it! Who have you got in . . . (Seeing thief now at hallway door) . . . and just who are you?

THIEF: (Nervously bluffing) I'm . . . uh . . . I'm Adam!

DENNIS: Well, I'm Eve! And when I get through with that snake, Herby . . . He's going to look like the Devil!!! (Pushing by thief into the bedroom) Where are you, you miserable, cheating . . .

THIEF: Believe me, Cousin Dennis, there's no one here but me . . . I was in the bathroom showering . . . Until I heard you . . . Banging on the door . . .

DENNIS: (Calming himself, comes into hall, puzzled) Cousin, Dennis?

THIEF: Your roommate said I could use the shower while he went to the airport to get my luggage. I'm sorry I latched the door . . . I didn't expect . . .

DENNIS: (Almost convinced but still upset) The airport? . . . Hey, you really are Adam, aren't you? . . . Aren't you? (Last line is said as he turns on lamp)

THIEF: (Standing in doorway nervously) Have I changed so much over the years? You certainly have. Better than ever. (Smiles)

DENNIS: I guess it has been a long time. Really, I can hardly believe it's you. What happened to your hair?

THIEF: Oh, that. I . . . I dyed it.

DENNIS: And what about your nose? It was sort of . . .

THIEF: Had it fixed last year . . . in Hawaii.

DENNIS: And what about your big teeth? . . . Good Lord, I'm beginning to sound like 'Little Red Riding Hood!!'

THIEF: Well the teeth are false, too. But I must confess that I am a big, bad wolf. (Moves close to Dennis) And my false ones aren't nearly as painful as the ones I used to use on you back in Oklahoma. Remember? (Kiss Dennis)

DENNIS: (Returns kiss and runs hands up and down thief's back as towel falls to floor) Everything else seems to be real.

THIEF: Thanks.

DENNIS: (Bending down to pick up towel, stares into thief's crotch) Oh, Grandma! Have you ever grown. (Stands) You're going to catch cold by just walking around all wet like that. Let me dry you off. (Uses towel on thief)

THIEF: Thanks. That feels great. (Moves to edge of divan, sits) You'd make someone a great lover.

DENNIS: Which reminds me. How long ago did Herby leave for the airport?

THIEF: About 15 minutes or so, I would say. He made me this bed on the divan and went straight for my luggage. He thought you were working late tonight.

DENNIS: I just told him that so he wouldn't find out about the orgy.

THIEF: An orgy? That sounds like fun. I haven't had anything for 3 days.

DENNIS: I know just how you feel . . . times 7. And this was no ordinary orgy. This one was an orgy with a capital O. Howard Hefner, the millionaire who owns PLAY-GAY magazine, throws one every year. He invites only the best bodies, and imports the food, booze and dozens of his nude bunny-tail boys for entertainment. There's dancing until midnight . . . then it's lights out and a free for all orgy until dawn.

THIEF: Sounds wild. Where does all this take place?

DENNIS: In his large summer mansion in the hills above the strip. The orgy is to celebrate his last night in Hollywood. Tomorrow he closes up the estate and takes his big staff to Florida for the winter. What a life.

THIEF: Yeah, sounds like a perfect setup. Why didn't you go?

DENNIS: Because Herby poured cold water on my plans . . . My invitation actually. I had it hidden in this vase over here . . . Hey, can you believe this? Here it is in the chair. (Picks it up) It must have fallen out when I was talking to Virgie. (Crosses to end table, gives card to thief)

THIEF: It says 'Admit bearer . . . 9 to 11 p. m.'

DENNIS: (Considering going) If the guard on the gate doesn't leave until eleven . . . Do you have the time?

THIEF: (Places card on end table and pulls Dennis into an embrace and kiss) I do if you do. (Kiss pulls both of them onto the divan for a few moments)

DENNIS: (Stands up, looking at nude thief on divan) I do! (Starts quickly removing shirt and clothes) But you'll have to make it quick. I've got to get out of here before Herby gets back with your luggage.
(Continues)

THIEF: (Sits up quickly) That reminds me . . . there's something I forgot in the bathroom.

DENNIS: Let it wait. You don't know how much time you're going to get for this!

THIEF: I'd rather not think about things like that. (Helps Dennis finish undressing and pulls him down on divan . . . More movements and moaning . . . then he stands up) Sorry, love. Too much light in here.

DENNIS: (Breathing heavily) Good lord, don't stop now. What are you? Sadistic?

THIEF: I just want to set the right mood. To make this an experience that you'll never be able to forget. (Crosses to phono . . . puts on Hawaiian music) Soft music of the islands. (Back to Dennis on the divan) You are stretched out on the beach at Wakiki. (Positions him tenderly on divan) Your bronzed nude back glistening in the sunset. (Takes lubricant from end table) A little cocoanut oil makes you more enticing. (Fakes applying oil) Don't move that muscle, I'll be right back. (Crosses up to lamp) And now as the sun sinks into the sea . . . You lie waiting for your handsome lover to fulfill your dream. (Lamp off, he crosses to bathroom, knocks 3 times gently, moves back across room for the invitation on the end table, and quietly exits UC out front door.)

HERBY: (Comes slowly out of bathroom, still nude, sees body on divan, moves to divan and tenderly straddles Dennis) Mmmmmmm. Beautiful. (Bends head down to kiss Dennis' neck)

DENNIS: (Impatiently) Yeah, great. But hurry it up will ya . . . ? . . . Herby??

HERBY: (Quickly raising head and trying to see)
Denny?! Oh, my God!

DENNIS: (Turning head to look at Herby) What the Hell are you doing?

HERBY: What do you think I'm doing? (Stands in front of divan L)

DENNIS: (Raises up on knees on divan middle or R) I didn't mean 'what' I meant 'who'? You're supposed to be at the airport.

HERBY: While you're here at home trying to 'FLY UNITED' with your cousin?

DENNIS: Were you hiding in the bathroom? What kind of a trap are you two trying to pull on me anyway?

HERBY: We two? Look he's your cousin. He told me to stay in there until you went to the airport . . . Hey? Where is he anyway?

DENNIS: Yeah, he's the one who set this up. Adam!!

(Herby exists into bathroom after turning on lamp at desk. Dennis exists into bedroom and kitchen area. Moments later they return)

HERBY: (Coming out of bathroom with bag) He's gone! But I think he'll be back. He left his travelling bag in the bathroom.

DENNIS: (Appears at doorway) Herby, I think we've both been screwed! The silverware is missing and several of my souvenirs are gone.

HERBY: Oh, come on, Denny. Why would your own cousin . . . ?

DENNIS: That was no cousin . . . That was a thief!

HERBY: (Looks at bag) Then this must be . . . (Opens bag) . . . Yep! Here's the silverware . . . and lots of other stuff. I guess he must have panicked and forgot it!

DENNIS: (Aloud to himself) I should have known he wasn't Adam . . . But his costume was so perfect.

HERBY: (Closing bag) Well at least this thief didn't get anything. (Then a look to Dennis) . . . Or did he?

DENNIS: No, I'm still in one place. How about you?

HERBY: I'm still holding. He sure made fools of us . . . but I think we deserved what we got.

DENNIS: (Crossing down to end table) Look, he even left his cocoanut-flavored joy jell.

HERBY: Oh, no. That's mine. Remember I bought it from Virgie at that party we went to three weeks ago?

DENNIS: Virgie? My best friend? Virgie? The telephone queen? How could you? (He sinks into chair DL)

HERBY: It was your idea. Virgie won 2 jars as a door prize, and you insisted I buy them from him. I know you were stoned, but if you don't remember my cocoanut, surely you remember your strawberry. You kept trying to use it on me, until you lost the jar.

DENNIS: Are you telling me I've been sleeping on the divan for 3 weeks because of the stains I made in your . . . How can you live with such an idiot?

HERBY: (Holds out hand) How could I live without such an idiot? Let's go to bed.

DENNIS: (Rises and takes his hand) Hey, what was it that you thought I was mad about? You must have been guilty of something . . . Don't tell me. (Kiss) Whatever it was I forgive you and go latch the door.

HERBY: I'm not all-faithful, but I do love you, you know. (A longer kiss) Hey, you kiss better than a cousin. (He goes to latch door. Noises of locks)

DENNIS: Well, tomorrow the real cousin Adam will arrive.

HERBY: While our lovable thief may be halfway to Florida.

DENNIS: Oh, my invitation! (Goes to end table to look) It's gone! . . . Herby, I think I know where he is.

HERBY: (Coming back to Dennis, puzzled) What?

DENNIS: Well, Rock gave it to me, and I put it in the vase so you wouldn't see it, but I forgot it and came back for it. I almost had it but Virgie called and I got the vase stuck on my hand. Then I thought it was ruined when you filled the vase with water for the

flowers . . . Oh, Herby, you brought me flowers.
(Crosses and takes flowers from the vase.) Well, I found it in the chair and showed it to the thief. He must have taken it, and I bet he's there now. Do you think we should call the police? I can give them a perfect description.

HERBY: I'll bet you can. But right now we're going to make up for those 3 weeks. (He pulls Dennis gently over his shoulder and carries him UC pausing to let Dennis turn out the lamp on the desk)

DENNIS: Well, I hope Howard Hefner is well insured!
(He clicks out lamp and is carried into the bedroom)

CURTAIN

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gene Ray Touchet was born in Beaumont, Texas, on April 2, 1938. He received his primary and secondary education in Beaumont's parochial and public schools. He interrupted his undergraduate studies when he joined the United States Army in 1958. Upon the completion of his tour of duty he returned to Lamar State College of Technology in Beaumont and completed his Bachelor of Science degree in speech in 1963. He taught speech, dramatics, and English at Clifford J. Scott High School in East Orange, New Jersey, from 1963 until 1969. He received a Master of Arts degree in theatre arts in education from Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, in June of 1969. In September of that same year he began his doctoral studies at the University of Florida in Gainesville. In September of 1973, he was appointed Instructor of Speech and English at Columbia State Community College, Columbia, Tennessee.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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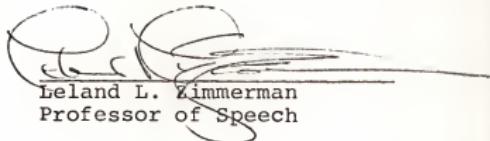
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